3 CDD89
DOG SWAMP
NEWS & POST OFFICE

We built the **FASTEST GAMES PC IN THE WORLD**, you can **WIN IT!** WORTH OVER $15,000

PC PowerPlay

THE AUSTRALIAN PC [illegible] MAGAZINE

[illegible]ES CD ROM

QUAKE II

THE ALMOST-PERFECT GAME
Full Review and Interview

EPIC

INTEL'S NEW CPU
Ultimate Gaming Power

I-WAR
LONGBOW 2
MONKEY ISLAND 3

MULTIPLAYER GAMING:
Are single-player games doomed?

CYBERATHLETIC PROFESSIONAL LEAGUE
Play games for a living!

16 DEMOS ON THE CD:

including
I-WAR
TOCA Touring Cars
Tomb Raider 2
Dark Reign
Total Annihilation

No CD? Ask your Retailer

ISSUE 21 February 1998 $8.95 NZ $11.95 inc. GST

9 771326 564002

A POWERFUL NEW FORCE INFILTRATES THE *STAR WARS* GALAXY.

MYSTERIES OF THE SITH™
NEW COMPANION MISSIONS FOR JEDI KNIGHT™: DARK FORCES™ II

MATURE
15 YEARS & OVER

STAR WARS™ JEDI KNIGHT™ MYSTERIES OF THE SITH™

COMPANION MISSIONS

Jedi Knight: Dark Forces II, one of our most heralded and best-selling interactive entertainment titles, unleashes a powerful new force this Summer with Jedi Knight: Mysteries of the Sith, an exhilarating collection of new companion missions. This expansion pack features 29 immersive single and multiplayer levels and introduces a compelling new playable character, Mara Jade, a former covert agent for the Galactic Empire. Players will battle more than 20 new creatures throughout Mysteries of the Sith, and have five new Force powers available as well as a range of new weaponry. A full registered version of Jedi Knight: Dark Forces II is required.

www.lucasarts.com

VISIT THE OFFICIAL *STAR WARS*™ WEBSITE: www.starwars.com

Exclusively distributed by

Metro Games

LUCAS Arts

© 1998 Lucasfilm Ltd. & TM. All rights reserved. Used under authorisation.

PC PowerPlay

ISSUE 21

FEBRUARY 1998

Publisher: Phillip Keir *keir@next.com.au*
Editor: Ben Mansill *ben@next.com.au*
Deputy Editor: Gareth Jones *gareth@next.com.au*
Art Director: Malcolm Campbell *malcolm@next.com.au*
Contributors: Peter Sharpe, David Wildgoose, Ed Dawson, March Stepnik, Maj. Ian Lindgren, George Argy, Rod "Spoonman" Campbell
Technical editors: Jere Lawrence, Garry Wallis, Ashton Mills
US Correspondants: Steven Dale Greenlee, Brenda Garneau
UK & European Correspondant: Derek dela Fuente
CD Editor: Jere Lawrence
Photographer: Scott Wajon

Cover Art: Paul Steed of iD Software (thanks Paul!)

ADVERTISING
National Sales Director: Steve Watson *steve@next.com.au*
Advertising Manager: Julie-Ann Kwok *julie@next.com.au*
Production Co-ordinator: Emma Beck *emma@next.com.au*
Phone: (02) 9310 1433
Fax: (02) 9310 2012
Victorian Ad Manager: Joanne Lockart *joanne@next.com.au*
Phone: (03) 9866 8144
Circulation Manager: Paul Cox *paul@next.com.au*
Publishing Assistant: Melissa Doyle *melissa@next.com.au*
Group Accountant: Theo Fatseas *theo@next.com.au*
SUBSCRIPTIONS: Enquiries: Rachel Pirie
Phone: (02) 9310 1433
e-mail subs@next.com.au
Fax: 02 9310 1315

All copyrights reserved by
Next Publishing Pty Ltd
ACN No 002 647 645
Printed by Wilke Colour
Film produced by Prestige Colour
Distributed by NDD 02 9353 9911
ISSN: PCPP 1326-5644

Write to PC PowerPlay at:
78 Renwick St, Redfern,
NSW 2016, Australia
E-mail: pcpowerplay@next.com.au
Fax: 02 9310 1315
CD tech support: *cdtech@pcpowerplay.next.com.au*
Oracle: *oracle@pcpowerplay.next.com.au*
Setup: *setup@pcpowerplay.next.com.au*
Letters: *letters@pcpowerplay.next.com.au*

What we're playing: I-War, Moto Racer, TOCA Tourers, MOO2, Quake 2, Total Annihilation, FIFA 98, CM 2, Constructor, Final Fantasy VII

Visit us online: **www.hyperactive.com**

Editorial

Welcome to PC PowerPlay # 21. It's a good number, 21, signifying a coming of age, a maturity, a landmark passed. It also means that PC PowerPlay is firmly entrenched as *The Source* for PC gamers in Australia, New Zealand, and thanks to Enrico, our Chilean subscriber, the world.

Thanks to you, most of all. Aside from the obvious fact that you wonderful wonderful people are buying our mag in hugely increasing numbers, we also have you to thank for making some great suggestions which we've incorporated. Those of you who've stuck with us from the beginning will have seen PCPP evolve in both style and content. But we're not finished yet. Over the next couple of issues we're introducing quite a few new things. Nothing that'll mess with the PCPP you know and hopefully love, but enhancements that will bring you a better read each month.

Like a complete listing of all games ever reviewed, plus their scores, like beginner's explanations included with our advanced technical features, bigger and more comprehensive game reviews - including detailed info about 3D accelerator support, more D.I.Y guides and better product testing and comparisons. We'll also be introducing a completely new interface for the cover CD - finally! We'll be asking more of you too, reader, with competitions that make you use your intellect and creativity. It's not all "more" though, thanks to our recent Reader's Survey we'll be cutting back on the interviews, being the one thing most of you didn't like so much. We'll still be doing occasional interviews with especially big 'n' interesting people, like Mr Paul Steed of iD Software, who'se in this very issue.

Finally, for all we've done and all we're yet to do, a great big mother of a thank you goes out from me to the PCPP team, past and present. So, Malcolm, Gareth, Julie-Ann, Pete, David, Jere, Garry, Ashton, Ed, George S, George A, Scott W, Brenda, Spoonman, Major Ian, Harry, Boris, Mellissa O, Melissa D, Rachel, Kirsty, Emma, Paul, Peter Tosi, Roger, Julian, Matt D, Lance, Jo, Simon, March, Steve DG, Steve W and Phil - thanks guys, you're the best!

Ben

The PC PowerPlay scoring system

95%+ PLATINUM The Best. Virtually faultless, reserved for games which cause loss of sleep from thinking of nothing else.

90-94% GOLD A classic. Either an unquestionable example of superiority within its genre, or a ground breaking game that'll be setting trends.

80-90% A strong, eminently platable game. Hard to fault and likely to still be on the hard drive in 6 months time.

60-80% Competant and generally enjoyable. Flaws or mediocrity hold these games back from higher ratings.

40-60% Average and ordinary. Not bad, not good. Ideal gift

0-40% Bad, really bad. Boring, shamelessly unoriginal, cheap and horrible

contents

CD GUIDE 6
We've gone overboard this month, packing in a whole summer holiday's worth of games on the CD. Here's where you can read all about the fun and how to have it.

NEWS 12
Microsoft finally caves in and includes native OpenGL support in Win 95, GTI and MicroProse call off the wedding, Ultima Online off again on again... Sierra discovers the joy of Diablo hackers and plenty more.

COMPETITION: THE ULTIMATE GAMING MACHINE 20
With money no object, we've come up with the biggest, baddest gaming monster on the planet. Then we built it... The Earth moved and in a moment of joyous madness we decided to give it away!

AURAN COMP 22
The famous Auran/PC PowerPlay Design a Game contest has drawn to a close. Marvel at the genius PC PowerPlay readers possess.

COMPETITIONS 24
Being the Quake 2 issue and all, we've predictably got a Quake 2 competition happening... Other really cool stuff to win too.

QUAKE 2: iD INTERVIEW 26
Paul Steed is the Art Guy behind Quake 2. He's also one hell of an interesting interviewee, pulling no punches and calling it like it is. Paul lets loose on the guys at iD, why Quake 2 is what it is, what they're doing next and a ton more.

GAME JOBS: THE SOUND GUY 32
Our ongoing, "inside the biz" series takes a look at the guy that makes all those wonderful noises come out of your PC when you play loud.

THE GAME DEBATE: MULTIPLAYER vs. SINGLE PLAYER WILL ONE EVER REPLACE THE OTHER? 40
Head to head, it's on! Our resident cerebral philosophers Gareth Jones and David Wildgoose tackle the hard issue head on.

PREVIEWS 44
KknD 2, A I - Alien Intelligence, MAX 2, 10Six, X-Fire, Descent: Free Space. The Great War, War of the Worlds, Sim City 3000, Starship Troopers, Klingon Honour Guard, Star Trek: The Next Generation. Birth of the Federation, Battlezone, Quest For Glory V, Everquest, Riot.

REVIEWS 56
Quake 2, I-War, Seven Kingdoms, F22 ADF, Longbow 2, Monkey Island 3, Imperialism, Pax Imperia, Speed Rally, Steel Panthers III, Jack Nicklous 5, Andretti Racing, Panzer General 2, VR Baseball, International Rally Championship, Need for Speed SE, Pro Pinball, Streets of SimCity, Virtua Cop, Caesar's Palace, Civilization 2 addon, Magic the Gathering addon, Blood addon.

DIVERSIONS 94
Learn by stealth with a big 'n' sexy new encyclopedia, Dr Who from BBC Multimedia is everything you'd expect, we have dinosaurs, we have a guitar tutor, we have Star Wars Monopoly... Fun stuff that's not really gaming.

3DTECH NEWS 98
This month we examine the bleeding-edge games which push 3D technology to the limit. Inside the Quake 2 engine included too!

HOTWARE 102
Thrustmaster Nascar Pro wheel, plus their new RAGE 3D control pad, Hitachi's big new 19 incher, the ATI Rage II Expert@Play video card, Creative catches up with the PCI Sound Blaster, easy networking and lots more.

TECH.TXT SPECIAL: MULTIPLAY, BEHIND THE SCENES 106
From a phone call to a Deathmatch kill, how does the magic happen? We sent Garry Wallis behind the scenes to marvel at the technology behind the fun.

TECH.TXT 110
First there was CISC, then there was RISC, now Intel have unveiled EPIC. Apart from sounding a whole lot nicer, this new CPU technology will deliver previously unimagined power to gamers.

PLAYGUIDE:: DARK REIGN Pt 2 114
In the sequel to our mega-playguide we cover the Imperium. Go kick some Freedom Guard butt!

WEBSTALKER 118
A couple of years ago it would have been a joke, but now it's really happening. The Cyberathletic Professional League (CPL) are cultivating talented gamers for big-dollar tournaments. 'Tis truly the golden age of gaming!

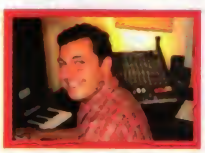
SETUP 120
The man with the black spray-painted PC is back. He's put his problems on hold this month to help with yours.

ORACLE 124
The most helpful gamer in the world. Oracle, or The Oracle as we affectionately call him, is here to help you get through the bits you're stuck in. Game-wise, that is.

CODE 127
Cheat codes for when you've completely lost interest.

LETTERS 128
Real, live PC PowerPlay readers talk about what's bothering them most.

FLASHBACK 130
All hail Falcon 3.0, the god-king of Combat Flight Sims. It's still an excellent way to pass the time while we wait for Falcon 4.0...



CD GUIDE

24 DEMOS

WELCOME TO THIS MONTH'S COVER CD AND WHAT A BIG MONTH IT IS TOO. WE HAVE RECEIVED DEMOS FROM EVERY CORNER OF THE GLOBE AND LITERALLY STUFFED THE CD UNTIL NOT A BYTE MORE COULD FIT.

Making it work: Plan B and C

REMEMBER, EVERY EFFORT HAS BEEN TAKEN TO ENSURE THE COVER CD WILL WORK ON AS WIDE A VARIETY OF MACHINES AS POSSIBLE, BUT IF YOU TRY A GAME, AND IT RUNS OFF THE CD TOO SLOWLY, OR SOUND DOESN'T WORK ETC. TRY USING THE INSTALL FUNCTION TO COPY IT TO YOUR HARD DRIVE OR IN THE EVENT OF THERE NOT BEING AN INSTALL FUNCTION, COPY THE DIRECTORY AS PER THE FOLLOWING.

IF THE UNTHINKABLE HAPPENS AND THE INSTALL PROCEDURE FAILS, NOTE THE TITLE OF EACH GAME IN THIS GUIDE. THE 3RD LINE LISTS THE DIRECTORY THE GAME IS LOCATED ON THE CD. JUST COPY THE DIRECTORY OFF OF YOUR HARD DRIVE TO THE CD, AND RUN THE EXECUTABLE MANUALLY.

CD Tech

Win 95

Running the Powerplay CD under Win 95 is best. All the games will appear on the menu and run, whether Win 95 or DOS.

CLICK ON THE POWERWIN ICON

DOS

Around half the games are DOS. The Powerplay DOS menu will only show DOS games

TYPE PCPOWER AT THE CD PROMPT (PROBABLY D:)

Win 3.1x

Some games will run under Win3.1x. The Powerplay menu won't work under Win3.1x, so run them straight from the CD with File Manager

RUN STRAIGHT FROM CD

I-War

Ocean
Windows 95 Sci Fi combat simulation.
\games\win95\iwardemo

I-War has really snuck up on all of us here at PowerPlay. Keeping a very low profile until now, this 3D space combat sim is an absolute killer. For starters, it features true space physics, i.e. acceleration in a frictionless environment - you keep on going. To alleviate the complexities of this kind of space flight, a series of autopilot systems can make corrections for you. What's possibly the most amazing facet however is that without any 3D acceleration at all, I-War looks absolutely fantastic.

System requirements: Pentium 90, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard. This game supports a Gamepad/Joystick. The key list is built into the game. Press pause (P) to bring up the key list.

Netstorm Demo Release 2

Activision
Windows 95 Real Time Strategy game.
\games\win95\netstorm

This is the latest release of the Netstorm Demo from Activision. Netstorm is a truly cerebral Real Time Strategy game with a series of twists. The first twist is a whole new approach in the way the game is played. Unlike other multi-player games, every battle in NetStorm counts towards each player's overall ranking. You control your own island and its library of knowledge until the very end of a campaign. Every victory then improves the island's military strength, increases your level of experience and better prepares you for the next battle.

The scenario revolves around a series of floating islands where you have to wage war to gain the favour of the Furies of Wind, Rain and Thunder to tap the power of the elements.

It even includes sacrifices. By capturing an enemy High Priest and sacrificing him to the Furies,

players gain the favour of their patron Fury. The more priests that are sacrificed, the more the Furies smile upon your tribe and grant additional Knowledge. This newly acquired learning helps build bigger, more powerful units. Excellent for both single play and multiplay.
System requirements: Pentium 90, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard, 9600 baud modem, Internet Connection.
This game is controlled with the mouse.

Zork Grand Inquisitor

Activision
Windows 95 Adventure.
\zgidemo
Zork Grand Inquisitor is one of this year's great releases. It's funny, captures the spirit of the original Zorks and the puzzles are fun, yet difficult and familiar in that overall Zorky way. This is also one of the only computer games (besides Monkey Island) that will actually have you walking away quoting lines from the game. Or the ultimate honour, placing Zork quotes at the bottom of your email!
"Who is the boss of you? ME! I am the boss of you" - Zork Grand Inquisitor or Ben Mansill?
System requirements: Pentium 90, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard.
This game is controlled with the mouse.

Dark Earth

Kallisto
Windows 95 3D adventure.
\dkedemo
Dark Earth has a distinctly adult feel which has been missing from a lot of games since the mid eighties. Besides the wordy dialogues that paint the picture of a ravaged Dark Earth, beginning the game waking up next to a buxom beauty is also a tad give away alluding to a more mature market. Dark Earth however is a captivating 3D game in the style of Alone in the Dark with a nice fighting engine and lovely 32,000 colour graphics on a non-accelerated PC.
System requirements: Pentium 90, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard.
This game supports a Gamepad / Joystick. See game intro for keyboard guide information

Zork Grand Inquisitor

Die by the sword

War Incorporated Demo

Interactive Magic
Dos Real Time Strategy.
\games\dos\wardemo
C&C Clone or Real Time strategy game? The jury is still out on War Incorporated because its addition of financial combat is an interesting twist to what is becoming a very crowded genre. Give it a go and decide for yourself.
System requirements: Pentium 90, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard.
This game is controlled with a mouse.

Art of Flying Demo

Blue Moon Interactive
Windows 95 3D action.
\games\win95\aofdemo
If you're one of the small percentage without a 3D accelerator then you will really appreciate Art of Flying. With the capability to run at 24 bit colour and extremely smooth 3D over a fractal surface, Art of Flying is an example of what we'd all be swooning over if 3D accelerators didn't exist. It's even delightfully playable. Pure 3D action fun.
System requirements: Pentium 90, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard.
This Game support a Gamepad/ Joystick. Press F1 in the game for a list of Keyboard commands.

Broken Sword 2

Virgin Interactive
Windows 95 Adventure.
\games\win95\bs2demo
Broken Sword 2 is an extremely well animated adventure that brings professional movie quality effects into it through the use of parallax scrolling. It looks great but the animation in this adventure is of an equally exceptional quality. A more adventurous plot is the theme for Broken Sword 2 and it looks great, now what are those G-String panties in my inventory for, Hmmmm..
System requirements: Pentium 90, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard.
This game is controlled with a mouse

Die By the Sword

Interplay
Windows 95 3D fighting.
\games\win95\dbts
Die By The Sword is a 3D action game where you play the part of a big and bulky Scottish warrior on a mission to whack and slash his way to victory. With fantastic gameplay, the Die By The Sword demo is only a small taste of the full version which will allow you to adventure through many locations... slashing your way to victory.
System requirements: Pentium 90, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard, Direct 3D compatible Accelerator. This game supports a Gamepad/Joystick/Mouse - Keyboard combination
W = Forward
S = Backwards
D = Turn Right
A = Turn Left
Keypad 5 = Mid section attack, sometimes affectionately referred to as the "weed whacker attack".
Keypad 6 = HEAD SWIPE. This attack is good for cleaving enemies heads from their shoulders.
Keypad 4 = OVERHEAD CHOP. This attack is good for chopping at fallen enemies.
Keypad 1 = Defend Low
Keypad 2 = Defend Middle
Keypad 3 = Defend high
Keypad buttons 7, 8, and 9 = Special attacks.
See the readme file for more information on how to use the VSIM (Virtual Sword in Motion??) system.

Dog Day Demo

Asylum/Eyst
Windows 95 Adventure.
\games\win95\dogdemo
A unique adventure game set in a world where Dogs are the intelligent dominant life form. (Note:

Any creature that can sucker another life form into caring for it in a modernised society so it can eat sleep and generally laze around is clearly the superior intellect). Irrespective of the definition of intelligence, Dog Day is a great adventure game that's been made right here in Australia.
System requirements: Pentium 90, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard. This game is controlled with a mouse.

Dark Reign Demo

Activision
Windows 95 Real Time Strategy.
\games\win95\drdemo
Dark Reign is a real time strategy game very much in the same vein of Red Alert but with perfect unit and play balance. Truly tactical inclusions include morphing and phasing, plus waypoints, complex programmable paths, modifiable AI and much more.
System requirements: Pentium 90, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard. This game is controlled with a mouse.
Ctrl - # = Assign a unit(s) to a group and erase all other affiliations.
Alt - # = Assign a unit(s) to a group and allow multiple affiliations.
Tab = Lay down Waypoint.
Enter = Send Message.
A = Attack.
Shift A = Attack without moving.
E = Select all units on screen.
H = Center on Primary HQ.
I = Use unit special function (i.e. Morph / phase etc.)
Shift D = Self Destruct.
Space = Center on last game event.
Home = Set building exit point.
R = Repair / Heal.
W = Re-Arm.
S = Stop.
X = Scatter.
T = Turn units.

DemonStar

MountainKing Studios
Win 95 Arcade Shoot em' up.
\games\win95\dsdemo
DemonStar is a gem of a shoot em up that mimics well the vertically scrolling shooter that was so popular in the arcades in the not so distant past. Lots of ships to destroy, plenty of weapon powerups and multiplayer on the same screen.
System requirements:
486 DX/66, 8Mb RAM, Soundcard. This game supports a Gamepad / Joystick
This game is controlled with a mouse.
Player 1 Start = ***F2***
Player 2 Start = ***F3***
Movement = ***Arrow Keys***
Shoot = ***Space Bar***
Mega-Bomb = ***Enter***

Excalibur 2555

Telstar
Windows 95 3D Adventure.
\games\win95\excaldmo
The legendary sword of Excalibur has been stolen by raiders from the future and only one person has the power to avert the catastrophic chain of events that will occur if the sword is not retrieved - that person is Bill the milkman. No seriously, it's you (duh). Take on the role of Merlin's humble apprentice as he sends you into the future equipped only with a trusty broadsword and limited spell-casting ability.
Will you fight your way through the multiple levels of the city of Salto, or choose to be more cautious and attempt to talk your way out of any tricky situations you find yourself in? A quite nice 3D adventure that's like a cross between Tomb Raider and Dark Earth.
System requirements:
Pentium 100, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard. This game supports a Gamepad / Joystick
This game supports a 3Dfx, Voodoo Rush and Direct 3D compatible accelerators.
Cursor Keys = Walk forwards, backwards, rotate left and right
Space Bar = Interact - Talk, pick-up objects, etc.
Shift = Run - Hold down in conjunction with the cursor keys
Alt = Use - Beth will use the active item in her Inventory
Ctrl = Fight mode - Press to enter and leave fight mode
Escape = Pause
F1 = Display the Inventory
Ctrl + Down = Block
Ctrl + Left = Back-handed slice
Ctrl + Right = Fore-handed slice
Ctrl + Up = Overhead slice/chop
Press CTRL or SHIFT to leave fight mode.

The Inventory
Cursor Keys = Scroll between the available items
Alt Key = Make the selected item 'active' (It will rotate)
Space Bar = Place the selected item in the Combination Box
Ctrl Key = Remove the selected item from the Combination Box

The Map
Cursor Keys = Scroll the map
F3 Key = Zoom the map in
F2 Key = Zoom the map out

TOCA Touring Cars

Codemasters
Windows 95 Racing Car Sim
\games\win95\tocademo
TOCA is a fantastic touring car simulation, which pits you against the current crop of drivers from the English series. The cars handle very realistically, the computer drivers are intelligent, and it's the kind of game that rewards a down and dirty driver who isn't afraid to make a few dents into the opposition cars to get to the chequered flag first. This demo allows you to play on the Donnington circuit for only a couple of laps, but don't be surprised if you find yourself racing them over and over again.
This game supports driving wheels/joysticks/keyboard (through the arrow keys).
System requirements: P133 (with 3D accelerator) / P166 (without), 16MB RAM, soundcard.

FA/18 Korea

Graphic Simulations Corporation
Windows 95 Flight simulation.
\games\win95\fa18demo
FA/18 is most definitely one of the nicest sims to date. If you own a 3Dfx or Direct 3D accelerator, graphically Hornet is a truly amazing experience with full distant drawing and ground texturing that looks exceptional-

ly real. When starting the demo, try replaying one of the saved mission examples to view how impressive this game both looks and plays.
System requirements: Pentium 100, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard. This game supports a Gamepad / Joystick. This game supports a 3Dfx, Voodoo Rush and Direct 3D compatible accelerators.
Keypad 4 = Aileron Left
Keypad 6 = Aileron Right
Keypad 8 = Elevator Down
Keypad 5 = Elevator Up
, = Rudder Left
/ = Rudder Center
. = Rudder Right
= = Increase Thrust
- = Decrease Thrust
Backspace/Delete = Afterburner
Spacebar = Speed Brake/Wheel Brakes
G = Gear
F = Flaps
H = Hook
shift D = Dump Fuel
shift F = Refuel
shift S = Service (refuel/rearm)
shift E = Eject
D = Damage Display
E = Engine Display

HUD Options
control A = HUD Altitude Toggle
control B = HUD Brightness
control C = HUD Clutter Reject
control H = HUD Hide

Navigation
A = Autopilot Toggle
shift A = Autopilot Mode Cycle
W = Waypoint Cycle
T = TACAN Cycle
L = ILS Toggle
M = Moving Map/Scale
N = Navigation/HSI Scale

Radar
R = AA/AG Radar Toggle
Q = Radar Sub-mode Cycle
B = Radar Standby
I = IFF Interrogate
Tab = Range Decrease
shift Tab = Range Increase
shift R = ACM Cycle
shift Q = AACQ Toggle
control R = Silent Mode

Scan Volume
Z = Decrease Azimuth
X = Decrease Elevation
shift Z = Increase Azimuth
shift X = Increase Elevation

Target Selection
shift up arrow = TDC Up
shift down arrow = TDC Down
shift left arrow = TDC Left
shift right arrow = TDC Right
**** = Designate/Cycle
***shift *** = Undesignate/TDC Stow

FA/18 Korea

Weapons
S = Stores Display
[= Cycle AA Weapons
] = Cycle AG Weapons
shift-] = CCIP/Auto Toggle
J = Jettison Station Select
' = Release Flare
; = Release Chaff
C = ECM Toggle
Enter/Return =Designate/Release

Electro-optical
Q = E/O Weapon Cycle
ctrl - = Zoom Out
ctrl = = Zoom In
ctrl up arrow = Slew Up
ctrl down arrow = Slew Down
ctrl left arrow = Slew Left
ctrl right arrow = Slew Right
***ctrl *** = Target Cycle

Harm
U = HARM Display
***control *** = Target Cycle

Views
1 = Cockpit
2 = Cockpit Lookdown
3 = External
4 = SA/Padlock
5 = Radar/E-O Target
6 = Ground/Tower
7 = Weapon External
8 = Weapon Eye
shift 1 = Tail #1
shift 2 = Tail #2
shift 3 = Wingman External
shift 4 = Padlock Wingman
shift 5 = Left Stores
shift 6 = Centerline
shift 7 = Right Stores
shift 8 = Left Wing
shift 9 = Fuselage
shift 0 = Right Wing

View Modifiers
down arrow = Look Back/Tilt Down
left arrow = Look/Pan Left
up arrow = Look/Tilt Up
right arrow = Look/Pan Right
9 = Move Camera In
0 = Move Camera Out
shift = = Optical Zoom In
shift - = Optical Zoom Out

Simulation Environment
shift escape = Exit Flight
control F = Fast-time Toggle
Escape = Reset Current Mission
P = Pause Flight
control E = Earlier Time
control L = Later Time
control N = Night Time
control J = Calibrate Joystick
control U = Unlock Replay Views
control I = Hide Instrumentation

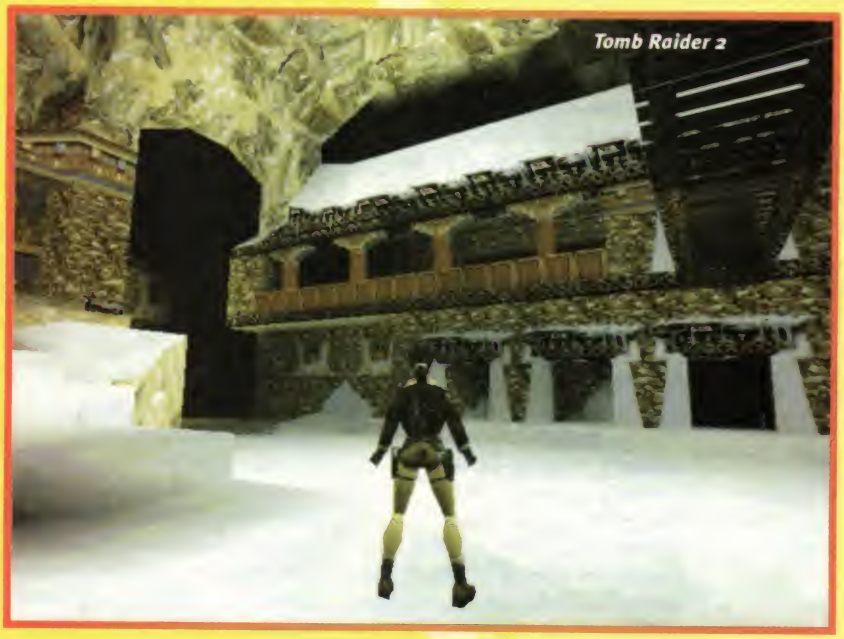
Fighting Force Demo

Eidos Interactive
Windows 95 3D Fighting.
\games\win95\fdemo
You may or may not remember an arcade game called Final Fight where you could choose between a Wrestler, or a kick-boxer and someone/something else. Anyway, it was an extremely popular game where you horizontally choofed along from one locale to another belting up bad guys. It was all very similar to Double Dragon (Wow, now that's kicking back the years). Ok, genre in mind, now imagine those games in glorious super fast, super detailed 3D, and you have fighting force. This demo rocks, the release will be even better.
System requirements: Pentium 100, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard. This game supports a Gamepad / Joystick. This game supports a 3Dfx, Voodoo Rush and Direct 3D compatible accelerators.

Incoming

Eidos Interactive
Windows 95 3D Fighting.
\games\win95\incoming
We have raved about incoming for quite some time now, and for good reason. The designers of this game have primarily targetted a Pentium 2 AGP audience and with the 3Dfx actually slowing down, they weren't kidding either. If you check out just one

Excalibur 2555



PC can run the "console only" games. Pandemonium 2 with its sweeping camera angles and lovely translucent texturing (3Dfx version) just reaffirms the PC (3D accelerator enabled) as the penultimate gaming system.
System requirements: Pentium 90, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard.
This game supports a Gamepad / Joystick. This game supports the 3Dfx / Direct 3D accelerator.

demo of the cover CD, check this one out, it's an incredible 3D accelerated experience.
System requirements: Pentium 133, 32Mb RAM, Soundcard, 3Dfx or very powerful Direct 3D accelerator.

Terra 2120

Kaon
Windows 95 Online 3D action.
\games\win95\iterra
Terra 2120 is one of the "new breed" of games, the online kind. Featuring the ability to join clans and build forts with complex defence systems this game has become very addictive for many people.
System requirements: Pentium 90, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard, 28,800 bps Internet Connection. This game supports a gamepad / Joystick. This game supports the 3Dfx.

Pandemonium 2

Crystal Dynamics
Windows 95 3D platformer.
\games\win95\pandemo
3D platformers are big on the Sony Playstation but haven't prevailed too much on the PC. It's good to see then that the Crystal Dynamics team have been big supporters of the 3Dfx bringing their style of platformer to the PC.
Pandemonium 1 was a great example of how successfully a water classic.
System requirements: Pentium 100, 32Mb RAM, Soundcard.
This game supports a Gamepad / Joystick. This game supports the 3Dfx / Rendition / Power VR / Direct 3D accelerator.
Heading/Pitch = Arrow keys
Forward = A
Backward = Z
Strafe Up = S
Strafe Down = X
Cycle through weapons = ***+***
Fire = ***Space***
Cycle through tools = ***[and]***
Activate tool = ***Ctrl***
Camera views = ***F1-F4***
Briefing/map screen = ***F6***
Message history = ***F7***

Total Annihilation

Cavedog
Windows 95 Real Time Strategy.
\games\win95\tademo
What can be said about Total Annihilation? Well, Ashton gave it a thumping 98% making it PC PowerPlay's highest scoring game ever and therefore instant PowerPlay Platinum Status. Discover for yourself the magic.
System requirements: Pentium 133, 32Mb RAM, Soundcard.
This game is controlled with the mouse
CTRL1 - CTRL9 = Assign the currently selected units to a squad
ALT1 - ALT9 = Activate (select) the previously assigned squad
1 - 9 = Select the menu for the current unit
F1 = Display information on selected unit
F2 = Bring up the Options menu
F3 = Go to the unit that last reported/chatted information
CTRL+F9 = Screen capture, will Print screen to file SHOT####.pcx
F12 = Clear all chat messages
CTRL+A = Select all of your units
CTRL+C = Center screen and select your Commander
CTRL+D = Self-destruct selected units (will toggle on and off)
CTRL+S = Select all units currently on the screen
CTRL+Z = Select all units of same type
A = Give an attack order

Sub Culture

Ubi Soft
Windows 95 3D Underwater Adventure / Sim.
\games\win95\subdemo
It's a little bit of Elite, a little bit of Privateer, even a little Subwar 2050, but all Sub Culture. You take on the role as a representative of a group of 1 inch sized humanoids under that have made the Ocean their home. Sub Culture offers some delightful missions and story line along with the immersion of a whole new race and "subterranean culture".
Destined to be an under-

B = Select the Build menu for that unit
C = Give a capture order
D = Use the Disintegrator Gun
E = Give a reclaim order
F = Toggles fire orders
G = Give a guard order
H = Share resources with another player
K = Toggles selected unit's cloaking capabilities
M = Give a move order
N = Scroll to the next unit off screen
O = Select the Order menu for the current unit
P = Give a patrol order
R = Give a repair order
S = Give a stop order (cancel any previous orders)
T = Track the selected unit
V = Toggles move orders
- = Reduce the game speed
+ = Increase the game speed
SHIFT = Hold down to queue up multiple commands
ENTER = Activate the message bar
ESC = Cancels the current command before it is executed
, (comma) = Select the previous menu for that unit
. (period) = Select the next menu for that unit
~ (tilde) = Toggle damage bars on the units
PAUSE = Pause the game

Tanarus

Sony
Windows 95 Online 3D Action.
\games\win95\tanarus
Sony are a smart company, there's no doubt at that at all, especially noting that their first and only game for the PC, is an Online one. Terra may have stolen Tanarus's thunder a little, though as both of these online games feature heavily with tanks and tank warfare. Worth a look, Tanarus is just the precursor to their big one- Everquest, the 3D Role playing game designed to take on Ultima Online. There are some exciting times ahead.
System requirements: Pentium 133, 32Mb RAM, Soundcard. This game supports a Gamepad / Joystick. This game supports the 3Dfx.

Tomb Raider 2

Eidos Interactive.
Windows 95 3rd person adventure
\games\win95\trdemo
You can bet we were especially pleased with the programmers who gave us the last featured version of Tomb Raider 2. Your feedback was gratefully received, though some of you sure don't mince words. The lost art of Diplomacy, anyway, Lara is back looking better then ever. The latest in the highly successful 3rd person perspective adventure game, this demo gives you a taste of the "Great Wall" level of the full game.
System requirements: Pentium 90, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard. This game supports a Joystick / Gamepad. This game supports the 3Dfx / Direct 3D
Esc = Menu / Inventory
Up = Run forward
Down = Hop backwards
Left = Turn Left
Right = Turn Right
Shift (with direction) = Walk
Alt (with direction) = Jump
Space = Draw Weapon
Ctrl (With weapon drawn) = Fire
Ctrl (when facing an object) = Climb, Press, pickup, push, pull, manipulate.

X Non Interactive demo

Ego
Windows 95 Space sim
\games\win95\xdemo
X is definitely a game we're looking out for. Featuring beautifully smooth accelerated graphics and some nicely designed ships, this epic Elite type game could well be the one that cleans house.
System requirements: Pentium 90, 16Mb RAM, Soundcard. This game supports the 3Dfx / Direct 3D

Utilities

Norton Crash Protect
The must install utility for Windows 95. It really does as the title states!

Netscape Communicator 4.04 Professional
The latest Netscape Communicator package (Professional edition) with all the extra bits.

Mcaffee Virus Scan 95
Mcaffee were the first anti-virus people and still arguably the best. This is the latest version of their Vshield for Windows 95 product which incorporates Scan and Clean.

MixMan Studio Demo
This neat little package is rather like an old "Mod" player called Scream Tracker. It essentially turns your machine into a very powerful midi device with many included mixing options. It's a ton of fun to tinker with and ideal for the younger folk who want to experiment with music.

DOS TROUBLESHOOTING

The most likely cause of any problem is a shortage of conventional memory. This has nothing to do with how much RAM is on your system, but how it's set up. To find out how much is available for the games, type MEM /C \MORE. Look for a line that reads LARGEST EXECUTABLE PROGRAM SIZE, if it's over 550k then everything should run. If it's under that figure, you'll need to edit your system files to sort it out.
The easiest way is to use the MAKE BOOT DISK facility found on most game installation menus. If you'd prefer not to do that, then you'll need to manually edit your two configuration files - the CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT.
To do so, type EDIT CONFIG.SYS and EDIT AUTOEXEC.BAT. In the CONFIG.SYS file, the most likely culprit is EMM386.EXE. You don't need it for the majority of games, so put REM at the start of the line. This will disable it. In the AUTOEXEC.BAT look to see if you are running SMARTDRV, if it's there, put REM at the start.
These two simple measures should overcome most problems. If you're still running short on conventional memory (the game should give you an error message telling you how much more you need), then a boot disk is the best solution.
THE PC POWERPLAY CD - The games on the CD are designed to be run in different ways. Some can be run straight from the disc, while others need to be installed. Games requiring installation will usually prompt you with a choice of where it will install to, so take note!
Many of the games which run from the CD will only produce sound effects if you have a Sound Blaster compatible sound card set to default settings. That's 99% of you, so if you get no sound you're best copying the game to your hard drive, then running the setup program - usually INSTALL, SETUP, CONFIG or SOUNDSET. As with all problems PC, trial and error is the only true solution. Feel free to copy an entire game to your hard drive. Also copy a game from the CD if it mysteriously refuses to install. Then run the INSTALL file from the hard drive.
DISCLAIMER - All possible care is taken while selecting, testing and installing the software which is included on the PC PowerPlay CD. Next Publishing accepts no responsibility for data loss or other damage which may occur during its use. If your CD is clearly faulty, send it in for free replacement to:
PC PowerPlay - CD Returns,
78 Renwick St, Redfern
NSW 2016
SUPPORT -
cdtech@pcpowerplay.next.com.au

sidelines

Anyone who's seen Westwood's Blade Runner would have to agree that the graphics and special effects were absolutely amazing. Well, Westwood were also quite happy about the look of the game - in fact, they liked it so much that they bought the company. Panoptic Imaging, based in New Jersey, were responsible for much of the special effects in Blade Runner, and Westwood are well pleased with themselves as a result of their acquisition. "Panoptic provides Westwood with an incredible new wealth of graphic design talent and creativity", says Westwood VP Louis Castle - and as long as Westwood's future games look as good as Blade Runner, I'm sure we'll all be satisfied.

Activision, despite their huge successes of the past few years including I'76, Heavy Gear, Mechwarrior 2, and of course Quake 2, are out looking for some more cash. They plan to try and find some private investors in an effort to raise up to $75 million to help with their "product development and program acquisition efforts". Is Activision heading for another fall from grace, or will they be cementing themselves right up at the top rung of game development and distribution companies? Only time will tell.

GameTek have, unfortunately, gone down the gurgler. They've filed for a 'chapter 11 reorganisation' which in Australian terms means they've gone bankrupt. It's a bit of a pity, because though they haven't been noted for their smash hit games lately, GameTek have been around for a long while and have been one of the stalwarts of the industry since 1988. They've sold their licenses for Dark Colony, Jeopardy and Wheel Of Fortune to 'Take Two' interactive entertainment.

WANT A PIECE OF ME?

Quake 2 features revolutionary 3D underwear, currently riding-up on Trooper Gus

GT Interactive & Microprose call off wedding

GT Interactive and MicroProse have had a change of heart regarding their merger agreement from October, and have announced that the deal will not be going ahead. If you believe the respective CEO's, the agreement was an amicable one, and as Stephen Race from MicroProse puts it "both managements agreed that the time simply is not right for combining the businesses". However, you can be sure that the usual backroom shenanigans went on behind the scenes during the two month process, and even though MicroProse has posted substantial losses lately they seem keen to continue as a semi-independent entity. GT Interactive will still be distributing many MicroProse products in mass market chain stores, and they hold the rights to distribute the Macintosh versions of MicroProse products under their 'Macsoft' brand name, as well as the rights to MicroProse's older games. GT are still keen to continue their expansion strategy, and are looking to increase investment in the "acquisitions of new development studios" as well as within their existing internal development studios. In itself, this isn't such a huge story. GT Interactive and MicroProse have been around a long while and have continued to pump out high quality games, but as time goes on there are more and more stories about mergers and acquisitions, CEO's and marketing guys, profits and losses, revitalisations and revenue figures, and all the associated hoo-haa. Let's just hope that the games themselves don't get left by the wayside.

We want Falcon 4.0, but Microprose staff didn't want GTI. Staff & management at Microprose blockaded their office, locking out GTI folks on the first day they were supposed to work together

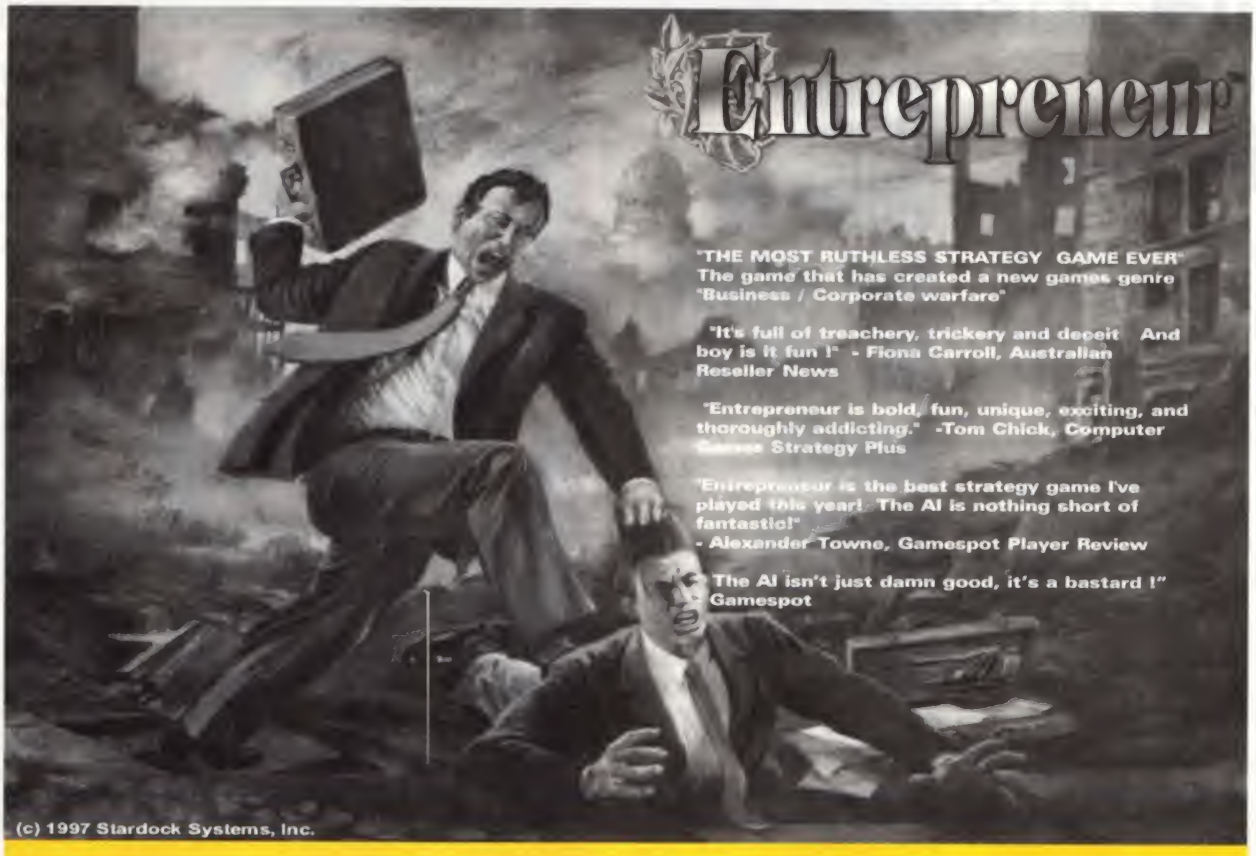
Microsoft set to go with OpenGL

The war of words going on between Microsoft and ID's John Carmack (along with many other developers) about which API to support looks as if it might have been sorted out - and it's not Carmack that has backed down. Microsoft have announced a partnership with Silicon Graphics to make a toolkit available for developing OpenGL drivers for the entire family of Windows platforms. Expected sometime in mid-1998, the 'Graphics Device Driver Kit' (DDK), will be based on Silicon Graphics' brand of OpenGL, and will be available for Windows 95 and NT 4 as well as Windows '98 and NT 5, and will enable OEM's to support OpenGL in hardware.

Microsoft's previous stance was firmly behind their own API, Direct 3D, and though the strategic alliance with Silicon Graphics must have been a large incentive, many have been taken aback by their change in mind-set. Microsoft aren't well known for changing their minds, especially when it involves supporting a non-Microsoft standard, and it will be interesting to see whether there are any developments in the near future in this area that make the reasons for their decision a little clearer.

Quake & Quake II (above) - proving influential games can help change the course of corporate steamrollers

For now, however, MS are saying that they still fully expect Direct 3D to become the API for "consumer-oriented graphics based applications" even though they seem to have accepted that OpenGL is here to stay. John Carmack, who was possibly the most outspoken OpenGL advocate, seems fairly chuffed and has said "Microsoft's endorsement of hardware accelerated OpenGL across both of their desktop operating systems has given us exactly what we want - the API of our choice on the distribution platforms of our choice". And we suspect many games developers would echo his sentiments. But the end result is that gamers can finally expect Windows-based OpenGL drivers for 3D accelerators in the near future - and it's about time too!



Is the advice you are giving your boss falling on deaf ears ?

Sick of the way your employees and workmates treat you like mud ?

Fed up with your product development ideas being ignored ?

You feel the opposition is coming, but only you can see it ?

You know you could run the company better !

Well, it's payback time ! .

This is NOT a business simulation.

Take the reins of a newly formed company, develop products that make the opposition look like they produce toys. Create marketing campaigns that have consumers waiting outside your stores when your new product is released. Build research centres that make NASA look like a school science lab. Send your salesmen into the market to turn whole countries toward your products. Whether you're the producer of Sun Block 2000 or flying typewriters, the name of the game is **WORLD DOMINATION** at any cost; as long as it's not yours....

Entrepreneur is the fun corporate strategy warfare game that sends your Warrior Salesmen out into the consumer battlefield. Fight against the cunning computer players, or create multi-player games against friends, workmates, or even your boss ! Revel in the opportunity to sabotage your opponents' plans, turn governments against them, cause workers to go on strike, or blow up the enemy's corporate headquarters. It's time to get even using the tools of Global Corporate Warfare !

Entrepreneur by Stardock Systems available now

FIND OUT MORE AND GET THE DEMO

WWW : www.stardock.com.au
Email : info@stardock.com.au
Phone : 02 9402 5006

Distributed by Frankson Information Management

WORLD DOMINATION ...Through Corporate Warfare.
A Ruthless Single or Multi-Player Strategy Wargame
for W95, NT & OS/2.

Entrepreneur™

sidelines

Gamer community reaction to the Sierra-published Diablo add-on pack 'Hellfire' has been somewhat mixed, due to the complete lack of multiplayer capabilities for the game. However, some enterprising 'fans' have managed to crack the game and have found a way to enable LAN and modem games (though not battle.net). At first Sierra weren't keen to even acknowledge the crack's existence (the amount of 'message deleted by moderator' headers in the RPG section of their web page forum attests to that), though they are now saying that as far as they know no-one has actually been able to play Hellfire multiplayer, even with the crack. Sure, the crack does exist, but it would have made things much simpler had Sierra just made LAN and modem play available right from the start...

Still with Sierra related news; CUC, Sierra's parent company, has announced that their new OGS called 'WON' (World Opponent Network) is open for beta testing. The good news is that despite a previous report from us that won.net will be a 'pay for play' service, it looks as though it will be completely free of charge - at least for the near future, anyway. They're expecting to expand the range of games available on the service shortly, but headline titles at present include Lords of the Realm 2, the Front Page Sports series of games, Hoyles' card game range, Red Baron 2, and WON will also link to bezerk.com for the YDKJ netshows.

Where next for RPG's? Diablo helped to popularise RPG's in a big way, Ultima Online has almost single handedly changed the face of role playing online, and games such Daggerfall, Fallout, and LOL2 have helped to push the genre to its limits - but that's not all. I. Hoffman and Associates, better known for their 'edutainment' titles, have put a RPG game into production that tries something yet again different - a VRML RPG. And that's not all either - they will also have a facility dubbed 'CD Connect' whereby players who have completed the normal game can connect to their web site and access further levels and challenges. It all sounds a bit gimmicky to us, but you never know these days - it might just be the start of something big.

Still not on the internet? No modem? No ISP? We're scheduling another mega-modem test for sometime very soon, but in the meantime have been testing the new Banksia WaveSP 56k. It's the same mini Opera House design as the 33.6, and it works nicely as a hands-free phone too. Very fast, very reliable and it's Australian. As a bonus you get 50 hours of Ozemail internet access free to get you started. $299 never bought so much online fun.

Ultima Online on sale locally, but still no Aussie servers...

Ultima Online is coming! Yes, RPG fans, rejoice and give yourselves a big pat on the back, for EA have proved that they do listen to gamers, and they have released Ultima Online in Australia. It's priced at $89.95, and includes one free month of playing time - and should be in your favourite games store right about now. Once your free month is up, even if you don't have a credit card you'll still be able to keep playing - EA and Origin have started up a scheme in America where you can purchase game time in three month chunks, and it looks likely that a concomitant scheme will be implemented in Australia (though nothing has been finalised as we go to print). The bad news is that there won't be any Australian servers, and so we'll be playing through the American ones, which means that the dreaded lag may denigrate the playability somewhat for us. However, they listened when we all whinged about not being able to play, and if we keep up the pressure for an Australian (or Asian-Pacific) set of servers, maybe in time this will become a reality as well. But still, a big thanks to EA, Origin, and the Ultima team for listening to their paying audience, and here's hoping we get our own servers eventually!

LARA IN THE FLESH

Marketing madness, Pt.17. Lara makes an appearance in the secret Pitt St. Blockbuster level, making the day of an obviously thrilled staffer. Nice guns though...

Top Ten Games

Rank TW	Rank LW	Title Developer / Distributor
1	2	RIVEN Bungie-Broderbund / Wolf Interactive
2	3	TOTAL ANNIHILATION Cavedog / GT Interactive
3	5	DARK REIGN Auran & Activision / Roadshow
4	1	AGE OF EMPIRES Microsoft / Various
5	4	JEDI KNIGHT: DARK FORCES II LucasArts / Metro Games
6	-	BLADE RUNNER Westwood - VIE / Digital Leisure
7	7	MS FLIGHT SIM '98 Microsoft / Various
8	9	NEED FOR SPEED 2: Spec ed. Electronic Arts / Electronic Arts
9	-	ODDWORLD: Abe's Oddysee Odd World Inhabitants / GT Interactive
10	14	MOTO RACER Electronic Arts / Electronic Arts

Week ending 16th December

The ACER best selling charts are carefully compiled from a sample panel of retailers selected across Australia including mass merchants, department stores, specialty software stores and independent outlets. Retailers surveyed include Myer Grace Bros, David Jones and John Martins, K Mart, Target, Big W, World 4 Kids, Harvey Norman Computer Super stores, Blockbuster, Brashes, Video Games Heaven and Games Wizards ©1997

Charts supplied by Australian Computer Entertainment Review

ACER

64 SOUNDS OF Car Racing

1 cars taking off 2 brakes screeching 3 hubcaps scraping 4 cheering 5 bets being placed 6 engine dying 7 hearts beating wildly 8 refuelling 9 wheels reversing 10 panting 11 "that was a close shave" 12 head-on collisions 13 bangs 14 engines revving 15 crowd roaring 16 explosion 17 driving into a pit stop 18 clanging 19 shrieks of horror 20 vroom 21 "low fuel!" 22 jamming on brakes 23 gears shifting 24 ambulance siren 25 sighs of relief 26 engines re-starting 27 sound of bare tyres 28 crowd going wild 29 "last lap" 30 bang 31 hubcaps falling off 32 tyres exploding 33 "fill er up quick" 34 engines sputtering 35 tyres being changed 36 nuts and bolts flying 37 grandstand cheering 38 gears cranking 39 heavy jamming on the brakes 40 sudden changes in direction 41 head-on crashes 42 tyres rolling off 43 skidding uncontrollably 44 screams 45 crowd falling silent 46 crash 47 thunderous booms 48 crowd roaring 49 quick turns 50 sudden stops 51 desperate braking 52 engines revving 53 sputtering 54 tyres screeching 55 shrieks 56 falling hubcabs 57 chants of the winner's name 58 refuelling 59 wheels being changed 60 sudden stops 61 accelerating past the finishline 62 champagne cork popping 63 congratulatory slaps on the back 64 whizzing pass.

WHY EXPERIENCE LESS?

No way you're spending a day at a car race if all you're going to hear are vrooms. That's because a real car racing experience would include a whole range of thrilling sounds. From screeching tyres and scraping hubcaps to head-on collisons! And it's just the same with a PC audio card. You'd want it to give you the works because anything else would be unreal. Introducing Sound Blaster AWE64 Gold, the card that delivers the works like no other!

64 Sounds of Advanced WavEffects™...Double the number of sounds of ordinary wavetable cards. Creative WaveGuide™ Synthesis...Injects expressivity for smooth natural audio. Excellent Signal-to-Noise Ratio...Cuts out the noise so you can enjoy high fidelity sounds. 20-bit SPDIF Sound Output...Delivers superior sound dynamics like no ordinary 16-bit audio card can. 3D Positional Audio...Places sound so realistically in your 3D space for a truly immersive experience. 4MB RAM...All the memory you need for exciting SoundFonts™ and thrilling sound tracks.

Sound Blaster AWE64 Gold is AWEsome Acoustics! Don't experience less.

Test drive the all new Sound Blaster AWE64 Gold at your nearest Creative Dealer.

CREATIVE
P•A•C•I•F•I•C

Distributed By:
Creative Pacific Pty Ltd 32-34 Dickson Ave, Artarmon, NSW, Australia 2064
Tel: (02) 9906 8887 Fax: (02) 9906 5577 Website: http://www.cppl.com.au

NEWS from the US by Steven Dale Greenlee

Home Again

Truth is stranger than fiction, unless it's some of the stuff I read, but the news concerning the demise of 7th Level as a game publisher continues.

Last month we reported that since 7th Level had merged and was now an Internet software developer, they were shedding all their game and entertainment properties. My question was what would happen to Return to Krondor? Now we know. The game company formerly known as 7th Level says it has sold its game development house PyroTechnix to Sierra Online for about $1.2 million. Included in the deal were all the rights to Return To Krondor and that includes the right for Sierra to use 7th Level's Top Gun engine. No changes were expected at PyroTechnix, which is based in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Interestingly enough, it was Sierra who first published Betrayal at Krondor back in 1994. The second in the series, Return to Krondor, is again based upon the best-selling Riftwar Saga novels by Raymond Feist. Feist told me at E3 last year that he was more involved with the development of the game this time around and was very excited to work on bringing his printed characters alive in the interactive gaming medium. Indeed, what I saw of the game, it looked like they were on the right track and now that Sierra is involved, I'm getting my hopes up that it will be a block-buster hit. Sierra says it plans on releasing Return to Krondor in time for Christmas this year.

And just to make sure we have all our noodles in the water, or is that butter on our oars, Panasonic Interactive Media has acquired the North American distribution rights for all of 7th Level's Monty Python titles while Take 2 will have the European distribution rights.

Raymond Feist at E3

Yes! No!

Sound like the conversation from your date last night? Actually, it's the latest word on the GT Interactive and Microprose merger. Last month it was yes. This month it's no. Both companies released a terse statement saying their boards of directors agreed to "terminate" the merger. Word is that GT Interactive got cold feet about absorbing Microprose because of the legacy gaming company's shaky financial condition. If the $250 million deal had gone through, it would have made GT Interactive the second largest entertainment game publisher in the world right behind - you guessed it! Electronic Arts. Now with the merger off, Microprose took a sharp hit to their already weak pocketbook. Microprose said it would lose up to $10 million on the scuttled plans on revenues of about $17 to $20 million. In response, Wall Street responded negatively and Microprose lost nearly half of its stock value. Microprose stock is now selling at a bargain basement price of just over two dollars a share. Ouch. In the meantime, Microprose says it will be working with GT Interactive on some projects in the near future.

GameTek officially in trouble

The Sausalito, California based game developer has been having problems for years now. Never really being able to bring to the market a bonafide hit and now after hemorrhaging mucho dollars, GameTek has filed for bankruptcy. The company says they have suffered heavy losses, financially crippling product delays and disappointing sales.

In the last couple of years, GameTek had been focusing more on console games. Mostly recently, they released Wheel of Fortune for the N64 and in the works is an N64 Jeopardy game (okay, so I'm trying not to laugh). At the moment, GameTek is putting a lot of effort into RoboTech: Crystal Dreams, but no ship date is even being talked about. GameTek's most recent PC release was Dark Colony, I game I liked and thought was much under-rated. Maybe they should have just stuck to making games for one platform instead of for all of them, including making games for the Sega Saturn.

In the summer of 1997, GameTek sold its European and Canadian subsidiaries to Take Two. It began its corporate life in 1988 and became a public company in 1994.

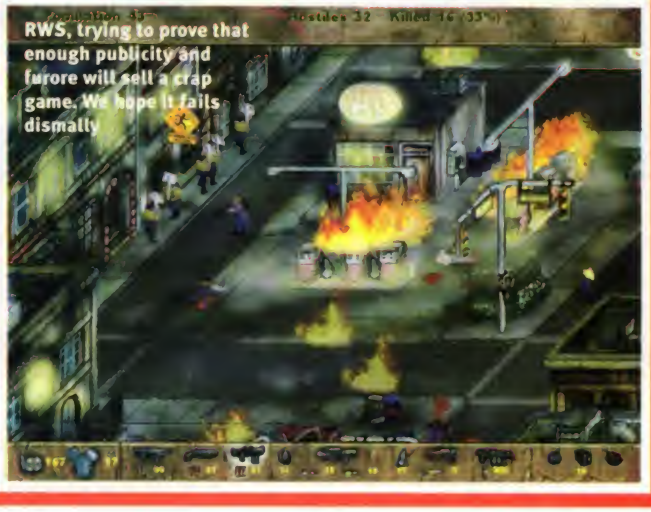
Postal Takes A Licking

Reverberations are still being felt about the recent decision of computer mega-store CompUSA deciding it would not sell the ultra violent game Postal. The game has been pulled from CompUSA shelves and that has Postal's designer, Running With Scissors, mad as Hades and ready to go...well...postal.

In reacting to earlier criticisms of the game, RWS's Vince Desi says he at least wants to thank the media, "...The Wall Street Journal, CNN, US News & World Report, the Philadelphia Inquirer and the rest of the media for at least spelling the name of the game correctly." He says, " I can't believe the media's reaction. Do they think that just because someone gets to play a nut they will become a nut? Because if they believe that, I think they've been sitting on their joystick too long".

As far as Desi's reaction to CompUSA pulling his game off the shelves because CompUSA thought it was inappropriate, he says, "Yeah, right". Postal's distributor Ripcord Games released a statement saying that they "respected" CompUSA's decision.

In the meantime, the Tucson, Arizona based RWS says they will continue to sell the game through their website (runningwithscissors.com). The game has since its release last May developed quite a cult following. Like those fans of Quake, Postal too has its "clans" called Postal Unions.


RWS, trying to prove that enough publicity and furore will sell a crap game. We hope it fails dismally

NEWS from the UK and EUROPE by Derek dela Fuente

License to Sell

It appears that licenses are back. Straight from the success of Goldeneye on the N64 come strong rumours we shall see it on the PC. Perfect Entertainment, which are one of the most successful UK/European developers, (they brought us Discword) are working on Naked Gun. This should arrive around the middle of next year. At present no screen shots are available, but as Discworld was the biggest ever selling adventure game in Europe, and there are even more Australians working for Perfect, this is one to look forward to. Also, the big news is that Perfect, who some regarded as Psygnosis' main team, have up and signed a deal with Gti for Discworld 3, which we will not see until 1999. Terry Pratchett will once again be totally involved with the game!

Faster than the speed of WHAT?

Just when we all thought we had the perfect PC, the developers start the mad new rush to up the ante. A P200 is now nothing special apparently, for on my visits to Probe to see the eagerly awaited Forsaken (a state of the art shoot-em-up with makes Descent look tame), they tell me their base machine - can you believe? - is a P300 with the latest 3D accelerator card. I asked the producer about it and he replied, "If the technology is around why not use it?" Developers have to stay ahead of the game you see... He also commented that the public have an "I want it" attitude, so he is not concerned that when the game comes out people will be buying the latest cards to keep abreast of the times.

Allegedly...

The demise of beleaguered software houses is nothing new, but where will it end? Well, it does look like Virgin are the next to undergo some form of metamorphosis. All we seem to see from them now are Westwood's games. Expect to hear in the next 2 months that they have folded, or that GTI have bought them out! Also expect to hear that Hasbro are not doing as well as expected. Frogger and Star Wars Monopoly have been flops and BeastWars, which was due, has been put back to next year, as well as Hedz.

Tip for 98

Creative Edge have been around for 6 years, but you may not have heard of them. They have had many games out, and Baldies is one of their biggest. They have focused on the US and Japanese market. Based in Scotland, and with personnel from DMA (Lemmings) they are set to conquer the rest of the world with 3 interesting titles, including a casino simulation. No, you do not play slot machines (they might add this) but build your own casino, restaurants, etc. Sounds pretty boring, but having seen and played the game I'm coming around. This is a great themey game that should appeal to a wide audience.

Bluemoon

You were the first to read about this Estonian games developer, and the first to have the demo of Art of Magic on a cover CD. Can you believe their web site is taking 4000 hits a day and 500 people are downloading the demo? Making this one of the top 20 downloads world-wide! At present they are working on 3 titles and all three have been bought up by leading publishers, but I am told I will have my legs broken if I mention them. They are now also working on a game called MARS, set on the planet of the same name. You fly your craft through a series of caves and among some of the most pleasing backdrops and graphics - all done with their own fractal engine. The team know that people have said their games look the business, so next they must get down to adding appealing and captivating gameplay!

SUBSCRIBE

WIN!

FILL OUT THIS COUPON AND MAIL TO:

PC PowerPlay
REPLY PAID 634
78 RENWICK ST
REDFERN NSW 2016

PC PowerPlay **021**

Name _____ Ph _____

Address _____

Suburb/Town _____ Postcode _____

Enclosed is my cheque/money order, or debit my credit card for

- ☐ $69.95 for one year subscription (12 issues, nearly 35% off) or
- ☐ $39.95 for 6 months subscription (6 issues at over 25%off) to PC PowerPlay magazine.
- ☐ $15.00 for back issue No. _____ _____

Bankcard ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ Expiry Date _____

Card No. ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐

Signature _____

Sure, being seen strolling, nay, strutting, nay, ***power strutting*** from the newsagent, with a fresh PC PowerPlay securely locked away in your Dick Tracey combination-lock briefcase is a damn fine feeling. One of life's finest, in fact.

But why bother rushing home to ***get into*** your new PC PowerPlay when you could've been there the whole time ***getting into*** your home-delivered subscription copy?

Do'h! Blinded by the perfection of logic! Relax, plenty of people don't realise how smart subscribing is. You want smart? From the PC PowerPlay brainstrust to you comes this irrefutable logic:

1. CHEAP.

Up to 35% cheaper than what Mr Newsagent will be wanting.

2. FAST.

Minimise the interruption to your precious gaming time. Get PCPP days ahead of the rest!

3. EASY.

Minimise the risk of coming home from the newsagent, only to find you've accidentally bought MacWorld by mistake!

So, SUBSCRIBE and get your fix the ***smart way***!

You want more? Here's more:

WIN a Ferraro Design ADVANTAGE 1 steering wheel and pedal set.

Reviewed in PCPP # 18, this Australian designed and made controller truly is the best there is. It's beautifully designed, as you'd expect from a company with a name like "Ferraro Design". D'oh! It's built for comfort, durability and speed. Most of the PCPP crew went off and bought one each after the review unit was sent tearfully back. We were impressed!

Thanks to Mr Ferraro himself we've got ***4*** of these Things Of Beauty to give away to 4 SUBSCRIBERS/RENEWERS this issue.

Impressed by big numbers: That's over ***$1600*** worth of gaming goodness up for grabs.

For more info on the Advantage 1 call ***0412 082244*** or visit ***www.ferrarodesign.com.au***

HOW TO

- Cut or copy the form and post it with a cheque or money order, or your credit card details, to:
  PC PowerPlay
  Subscriptions
  Reply Paid 634
  78 Renwick St., Redfern
  NSW 2016

- Fax a copy of the completed form, with credit card details, to:
  02 9310 1315

- email your name and address with credit card details to:
  subs@next.com.au

If you're not sure about something, call us on
02 9310 1433
or email subs@next.com.au

PLEASE DON'T...

Send subscription cheques and forms in the same envelope as competition entries. No comp. mail is actually opened - that's why we ask you to write the answer on the back, you see...

WINNERS

Issue #19 winners (Thrustmaster $1000 Pack)

A Dagis, Longford TAS

Runners up:

A Mildenhall, Parkwood Heights QLD
B Stewart, Mountain Gate VIC
H Cam, Camperdown NSW
B Ashworthy, Ballajura WA
M Graveson, Wollongbar NSW

THE PC POWERPLAY/PlayNOW

Ultimate Gaming BEAST

Worth over $15,000 WIN IT!

The mission: build the best

It started with a fanciful chat. Sitting around one Friday night, the PowerPlay crew mused at what was, in fact, the absolute, money-no-object Perfect Games PC. Technological parochialism being what it is, said Perfect Games PC was fine-tuned via vigourous debate, the end result, agreed upon by all, is the Beast you see on this very page.

Sensing that we'd created something bigger than all of us, we took it to the next logical step. We built it. With the backing of the games heads at PlayNOW, the Australian games channel, our dream has become a reality.

The machine detailed on this page is simply the finest and fastest gaming PC on the planet. Each component has been individually selected and matched to provide maximum power and flexibility. We're in awe.

...And they will come

Here's the amazing part. Thanks to the generosity of PlayNOW, the Australian games channel, we're able to give the Beast away. We've had competitions before, but nothing as huge as this. Because this $15,000 machine is so desirable, we're going to make you work a little for it. We'll be running the comp over this and the next issue and the questions will be tougher than usual. Good luck!

The competition

Part 1 of the competition runs this month. The Part 1 question is below, write the answer on the back of an envelope and send it to:

The Beast
PC PowerPlay
78 Renwick St
Redfern
NSW 2016

Q. List all Intel CPUs (including variants, such as SX and DX/2) from the 8086 (1978) through to the Pentium II/300 (1998).

Part 1 finalists will be drawn on Friday Feb 20th 1998.

5 correct entries will be drawn from the Part 1 question. 5 more correct entries will be drawn from the Part 2 question, which will appear in the March issue. On Friday March 21st 1998 we will draw a winner from the 10 finalists.

The Beast lives!

Even after this competition has run its course you won't be hearing the end of the Beast. Technology - especially games technology, is a fast moving thing. So, from time to time, as new components appear that impress us enough, we'll be updating the specs of the Beast. That way you'll always know what the fastest, meanest, biggest and best is.

The Beast

SYSTEM:

Pentium II 300MHz
64Mb SDRAM
2 x 4Gb IBM SCSI drives
SuperMicro P6SLS LX w/Ultra Wide SCSI controller on board
24 speed SCSI CD ROM

As our charter was to build the best, we naturally went with the fastest CPU available. It should be quite a while before you go lowering graphic detail with this mother. The SuperMicro motherboard is a speedy LX design, and importantly, has the Adaptec SCSI controller built onto the motherboard itself, saving a slot. 2 X 4Gb SCSI drives because SCSI handles them better than one large drive.

VIDEO:

Diamond Viper V330 video card
Diamond Monster 3D
VideoLogic 3DX PowerVR 2

3-phase Direct X support and hardware acceleration from hell. The Nvidia RIVA-based Viper 330 offers the fastest 2D performance around, and is complimented by unbeatable Direct3D performance. The Diamond 3Dfx was selected because Diamond have the fastest drivers. The PowerVR for those native games you can't live without and as an alternative Direct3D solution.

SOUND:

Diamond Monster Sound
Creative AWE64 Gold
Creative Cambridge Soundworks speakers

The sheer quality of the sound the PCI Monster produces is enough to warrant its inclusion, while the burden it lifts from the CPU through the PCI bus and on-board DSP is a happy bonus, as is the built-in 4-speaker surround sound. It still requires a DOS sound card though, so why not go with the best there is! The AWE64 Gold is the most refined realisation of the older technology available. The Cambridge Soundworks won the award in the PCPP Hot Hardware Guide. Its Bose-style satellites pump out quality sound relentlessly and the sharp and punchy subwoofer brings every Quake kill to life.

OTHER:

Sony 300sf 20" Trinitron monitor
Banksia WaveSP 56k modem
MS Mouse
Keyboard
Win 95 OSR2
1Gb JAZ SCSI Internal drive

The Sony 300sf is the perfect gaming monitor. At 20 inches the image size is just right. Any larger and you'd lose detail, any smaller and your friends just wouldn't be impressed. We chose the Banksia WaveSP because it's fast, it's Australian and it works faultlessly. The Microsoft Mouse is, along with Edit, probably the best MS products around, and is by far and away the nicest mouse on the market. We chucked the Jaz drive in because: A. We were left with a spare SCSI port, B. They're really cool.

CONTROLLERS:

MS Sidewinder Force Feedback stick
Ferraro Advantage 1 steering wheel
Thrustmaster X-Fighter stick

For all-purpose work you can't beat the Thrusty X-Fighter. It's big 'n' chunky with rubber bits, and most games support it natively. The MS Force Feedback stick is in because it's cutting-edge and new, as well as being pretty good with the right support. Finally, the Ferraro Advantage 1 is in because it's the best home driving controller in the world.

PlayNOW - NOW!

PlayNOW, the Australian games channel, delivers the latest news, reviews, demos and previews to your desktop. PlayNOW is localised pain relief to gameheads so addictive it should be illegal.
www.playnow.com.au
The PlayNOW site has an entry form for the competition too, so go there, NOW!

LET THE GAMES BEGIN!

WOLF INTERACTIVE

A DATAFLOW COMPANY

FOR ALL THE WILDEST ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTS.
TELEPHONE: (02) 9417 9600 FAX: 9417 9676

Logitech

WINGMAN WARRIOR
WINGMAN EXTREME

BLIZZARD ENTERTAINMENT

WARCRAFT
DIABLO
STARCRAFT

HASBRO Interactive

MONOPOLY STAR WARS
TRIVIAL PURSUIT
FROGGER
MONOPOLY

BERKELEY SYSTEMS

YOU DON'T
KNOW JACK

Microsoft

AGE OF EMPIRES
FLIGHT SIMULATOR '98

REDORB

RIVEN
MYST
TAKE NO PRISONERS

ARTDIR 8036 PCP

THE GREAT AURAN/PCPP DESIGN A GAME COMPETITION RESULTS!

In issues #17 and #18 of PC PowerPlay we ran the Auran/PC PowerPlay Design a Game competition. The brief was to come up with a game design, to be judged by Auran's Greg Lane and PCPP's Ben Mansill, the prize: a week at Auran HQ in Brisbane. We received a many high quality entries with lots of cool ideas. Judging was hard, because so many games were of a similar quality and many entrants had put so much time and thought into their submissions - we wanted to award them all! We want to thank everyone who took the time to enter - it's brilliant to see so many people interested in the gaming industry.

Winner:

DYNASTY

Colin Holmes, NSW

Greg: What I most liked about Colin's entry was the detailed environment he created for his game. This made his entry stand out. He'd gone to great lengths to describe the world in which the characters lived, and made it very easy to visualise the way the game would look and play.

It was obvious to me he had put a lot of thought into not only the game, but the story and characters behind it - and this shone through in his presentation.

His entry was also very professional, easy to follow and enjoyable to read. I think it's great when someone can present ideas in such a way that you can visualise them, just from words on the paper - and Colin did this.

Ben: I want to play this game! Colin has created a unique game world, one of immensely rich detail and complexity (his 28 page submission is heavy reading, but rewarding once the big picture becomes clear). Colin seems to prefer epic games which start off slowly, then over a few days of gaming build to a multi-layered level of complexity. Ultimately, the Dynasty world feels like a cross between Sim City (where the individuals respond to their environment) and Civilisation (where specialists are needed in carefully balanced quantities). To give you an idea of how far this game goes, here's a selection from the very beginning, and very end of Colin's submission:

"The player begins as a small wisp that can scroll around the island watching the plants and animals interact. Soon they will come across a small group of wandering Lopis or a crude camp where a tribe is based."

"If the Tribe's average Belief is high enough, Citz who are about to become Skeptics (with a low discontent) could place a Prayer Bubble over their house. If clicked it would show the thought topic and let the player pacify them."

Finalists:

Flux

Shane Brown, Qld

Greg: Shane's presentation was excellent, and he had a lot of good ideas for his game. I particularly liked his imaginative use of 3D graphics, his ideas for the way spells would work, and his strong, original story. Shane also went into a lot of detail which gave me a good understanding about how the game would work.

He also provided some 3D pictures of characters which really showed me how he saw his characters evolving, and how they would fit into the overall game. His overall presentation was excellent and the whole package helped to conjure the world he had created for his game.

Ben: Now here's a Warcraft fan. Shane's submission was rich in storyline and unit descriptions, but short of actual game mechanics. Expanding on the basic Warcraft premise, The Flux features highly complex unit classes in a relatively simple game environment. While the appropriately illustrated and layed-out proposal made very entertaining reading, the innovation and depth of the other contenders unfortunately turned out to be the downfall of The Flux.

War Master

Man Cheung, Qld

Greg: Man's submission was a lot of fun. His upbeat style of writing and innovative presentation set the scene for his ideas - although his game was about the not so fun topic of war!

One of my favourite parts of his design was his interesting use of orders (telling your units what to do) within the gameplay and his systematic approach for making his ideas work.

While creating games requires a lot of creativity, you also need to be able to create a practical and realistic foundation for your ideas, and Man, like the other finalists did this. To be successful in gaming, and in creating game designs, you need more than a good idea - you need to know how you are going make that idea work practically.

Ben: Man begins his submission with these most impressive words: "I want to feel like I am the head of the Army, not some celestial being looking down over the field of battle, like a child playing toy soldiers".

Weighty words, but that philosophy carries through his idea consistently. A sense of logic and reality pervaded, linked together with a plausible storyline that influenced the design, rather than complimenting it as an afterthought. I feel Man could be trusted with an important movie license translation, keeping the faith with the original concept. Man's game took more of a traditional RTS approach, with expanded orders, structure and resource types. Nothing really new though, just a highly polished concept that would probably do quite well.

Special Achievement:

No title

Minh Chau Chim, NSW

Greg: I want to mention the effort of Minh Chau Chim, whose entry was filled with lots of creative and cool ideas. His game would be great fun to play, and he had some excellent thoughts about spells, construction, and the effects of injuries on characters.

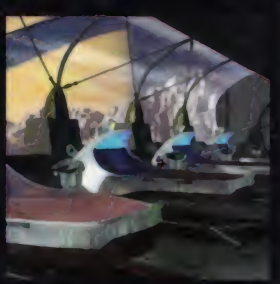
He also went into a lot of detail about how the game would play, and, again, made it easy for me to see just how his game would work. I really enjoyed reading Minh's submission, he had many interesting concepts and suggestions.

Ben: I was initially put off by the "handwritten on school book paper" style, but these entries were all fun to read and Minh's proved to be a real surprise. The Heroes of Might and Magic influence shone through clearly, and seeing as this is a game close to my heart I read with interest the many innovations Minh incorporated. Think of HOMM with a hefty dose of Civ-style resource management and real world physics and you have Minh's game.

Special Mention:

We received an entry from Cameron Smith, who was only seven years old. Now, while Cameron is a bit young to work with us for a week, and while he didn't send in any ideas, we did want to give him a special mention for effort and for being a keen gamer at such a young age!

THE ONLY HOPE FOR THE FUTURE LIES 3,700 YEARS IN THE PAST.



THE JOURNEYMAN PROJECT 3® LEGACY OF TIME™

Your mission: Embark on a journey of discovery paramount to earth's survival.
Your destination: The lost worlds of Shangri-La, El Dorado and Atlantis.
Your vehicle: Legacy of Time, a new CD-ROM adventure.

Proudly Distributed by

WOLF INTERACTIVE

www.JourneymanProject3.com

The Journeyman Project and Presto Studios are registered trademarks of Presto Studios, Inc.
Legacy of Time and Red Orb Entertainment are trademarks of Broderbund Software, Inc.

COMPETITIONS

Quake II

Write the answer, along with your name and address on the back of an envelope. All entries close February 23, 1997 Entries to: PC PowerPlay, 78 Renwick st. Redfern NSW 2016

Quake 2

There are games and there is Quake 2. There are phenomenons and there is Quake 2. There's even going out and socialising, but there's Quake 2.

We kind of like it. A lot. You will too. Being Quake 2, we just had to have a competition. Activision came through with the goods, just like they do, and we've got 6 copies of the game to give away. There's more too! Each winner also gets a truly magnificent Quake 2 T-Shirt. You won't be washing the car with this one! No sir! You've got to be in it, and all the rest...

Q. What's the name of ID Software's artist (interviewed this very issue)?

Monkey Island 3

There's graphic adventures and there's the Monkey Island series. 9 out of 10 gaming dentists agree that it's the finest adventure game series is ever. These same folk (and hey, you could be one of them), have been hanging out for Part 3 for a few desperate years. Now it's here! Woo hoo!

It'd be remiss of us not to have a comp for this magnificent example of gaming excellence, so here it is! Thanks Metro Games, you're tops.

Q. What species of monkey are most commonly used for scientific experiments?

Monkey Island 3

I-War

Space combat sims have been degenerating a bit lately. Good looking but ultimately shallow is what we've come to expect. Luckily I-War came along and slapped us around a bit, reminding us of just how good it can be. Real physics is what you get in this space. Not forgetting the brilliant mission design and drop-dead-gorgeous graphics. Yes indeed, this game has it all.

I-War

Win a copy here! Thanks to Roadshow we've got 6 to give away, so answer the question and good luck!

Q. Which german WWII rocket scientists helped develop the Saturn V rockets which took us to the moon?

Issue # 19 winners
Congratulations!
Enjoy!
Gloat!

Ultimate Christmas Hamper
T Rogosich, Bateman WA
W Perry, Moona Heights SA
D Hawkins, Kincumber NSW
S Schulze, Wangaratta VIC
M Massimi, Morwell VIC
J Stevenson, Bayswater VIC

Survey winners (Banksia WaveSP 56k modems)
L Harris, Christies Beach SA
A Townsley, Northgate QLD
K Bevis, Melton South VIC
C Knell, Oak Flats NSW

"BEST STRATEGY GAME YET"

- Computer Gaming World

LANDING SOON

STARCRAFT

BLIZZARD ENTERTAINMENT presents STARCRAFT featuring a REAL-TIME STRATEGY GAME directed by the makers of DIABLO® and WARCRAFT II™. preview at BLIZZARD.COM

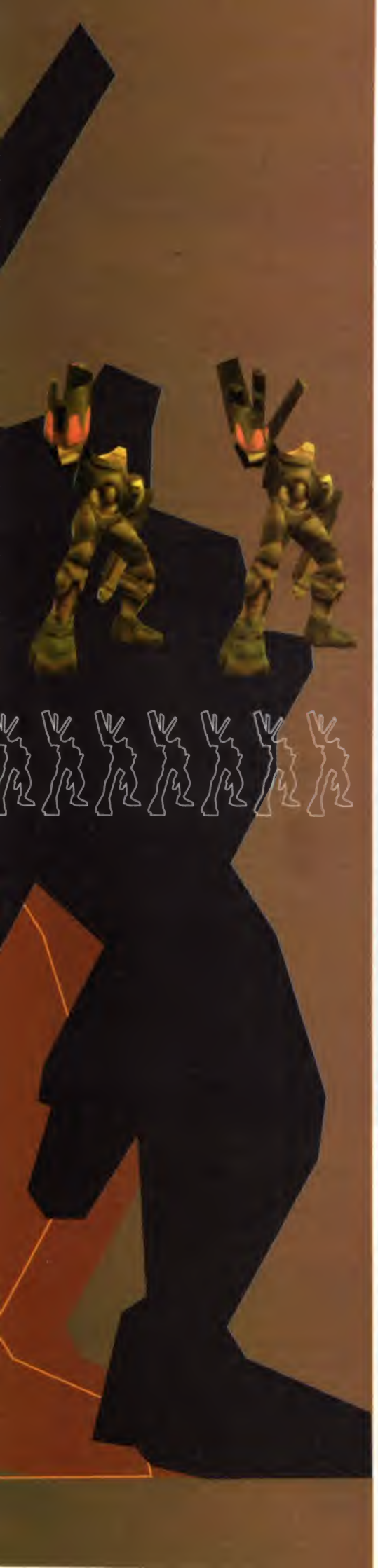
BLIZZARD ENTERTAINMENT

WOLF INTERACTIVE

StarCraft and Diablo are trademarks, and WarCraft and Blizzard Entertainment are registered trademarks of Davidson & Associates, Inc. © 1997 Davidson & Associates, Inc. All rights reserved.

THE ART OF DEATH

iD Software's PAUL STEED



Paul Steed's title at iD is simply Artist. The unpretentious simplicity of the title is typical of those that work at iD. What's not so simple is the amazing new world of gaming Paul and co. have created.

Paul began his career as a game artist in 1992 when he joined Origin Systems, where his pioneering work with the then emerging world of 3D graphics brought him international acclaim. Games such as Strike Commander, BioForge, Wings of Glory and Wing Commander III all bear the touch of Paul Steed.

After a year with Iguana Entertainment, and then Virgin Interactive, Paul scored his dream job - as Artist with iD Software. Thrown into the deep end from the outset, Paul has spent the last year creating much of the art in Quake 2. From the intro and cinematics to the character and weapon design and animation, Paul has created a fantastic world for us to spend the next couple of years appreciating, in between the slaughter of course.

Paul visited the offices of PC PowerPlay in early December and had the following chat with PCPP Ed. Ben Mansill. Besides being one hell of a nice guy and a mean pool player, Paul was kind enough to reveal much of the inner working of iD, the rationale behind the design of Quake 2 and some unashamed respect for the genius that is John Carmack.

PCPP: Why did you ditch the shareware approach in favour of traditional distribution via Activision?
PS: A couple of reasons, one is just convenience, it really wasn't a very smart marketing scheme on the standpoint of security, I mean, there's a lot of people that cracked the shareware version the day that it came out and got to the full game. And just time, we had the time to position the shareware version and market it as we would the full game, it just didn't seem it was necessary at the time.

PCPP: Quake has got to be one of the most pirated games in history, why is it only now that you're instituting copy protection?
PS: Quake 2's a big game, it's gonna be huge. The production values we put in Quake 2 have never been seen before. The copyright protection is there basically as a commitment to our publisher Activision. We're involved with another company here, so their interests are at stake as well as ours. I just think it's a common sense thing. I mean, we give so much to the Quake community as it is, for example, every month, after the game is released I'm gonna take a character from the game and match the animation set to the actual player character and release it to the internet so you'll be able to pick, in say 12 months time, 14 characters to play the game as, for free. We won't be charging anybody for this, we won't charge anybody for upgrades, we won't charge anybody for multiplayer support, for GL support, we just do it because we dig the fans.

PCPP: I guess that's manifested in the many different platforms you'll be porting the game too, like Linux...
PS: We don't really concern ourselves with that, we just give the base product and we are lucky enough to have people devoted enough to it to say they'll do what it takes to port it to whatever. Some platforms are obviously more suited than others.

PCPP: So we can expect Quake 2 for just about everything except the Amiga?
PS: As far as I know Amiga and Mac, there are no plans for Quake 2 to go to those platforms.

PCPP: So no Mac Quake 2?
PS: Well we have to see how Quake goes on the Mac first. It's a marketing decision for the biz guys.

PCPP: Were you under any serious pressure from Activision in respect to Quake 2's content or completion date?
PS: Nup, it's a really good relationship. Activision knows what they've got in their hands and they respect iD and we respect Activision. I mean, Activision has the distribution base and a sense of respect that we've looked for.

PCPP: ...and a growing reputation of late as active marketers, a company that likes to hype things up in advance, are you comfortable with that?
PS: I don't think the product's been overhyped, It's appropriate for the level of gaming that you're going to get. It's the best game of 1997.

PCPP: Where are all the "Quake Killers" promised by so many so long ago?
PS: Everyone wants a Quake Killer, because it's kind of boring news to have iD always put out the good games. It's boring, it's not being sensationalistic. It's like, "Oh yeah, iD puts out a cool new game, it's a hit, it makes tons of money" so they want to hype up these games to try and displace iD, Quake, whatever. Problem is, they just don't have what it takes.

PCPP: There's Jedi Knight out and impressing people, but that's gone in a different direction...
PS: Right. It's a different kind of game. Jedi's closer to an RPG than it is an action game. I play it, I'm a big Star Wars fan, but the only reason I play it is to see the next cutscene.

PCPP: You don't enjoy the gameplay?
PS: Well, once you've played Quake 2... It's just very very bad art. As a modeller and animator I see the reason why they did some of the things the way they did. I mean, everyone wears a skirt on this planet because they can't build legs. It's easy to put these low-poly skirts on people and they don't do anything! All the NPC's in there are only a way of going to the light side or the dark side of the force. If you kill them you waste your ammo and you become a bad person and I don't think it adds anything intrinsically to the gameplay.

PCPP: What about the forthcoming Quake-engine games - Sin, Half Life, Daikatana...
PS: Well you gotta understand is that the way it works is that there's a licensing agreement there, but for example, Half Life, those programmers are very talented, they've taken the shell of the engine and progressed it towards the direction they want, unfortunately the don't have the experience necessary to optimise the engine and the code to suit the consumer as much as iD does. They have really high hopes and aspirations to make the game something that Quake isn't, but there's a reason why Quake is limited in certain ways and it's a performance issue, you're going to see games like Half Life and Daikatana take major performance hits, or have very stringent requirements for their game.

PCPP: As opposed to Quake 2?
PS: Quake 2 has a big hardware requirement, I'm not saying it isn't. But theirs are going to be much worse, you're going to see bigger hard drive requirements, bigger RAM requirements, definitely more of a processor requirement. That's why they keep pushing it back, because they hope the Pentium II's are going to be more proliferate than the P90's.

PCPP: Some TC's are getting very sophisticated, do you foresee TC's threatening the commercial viability of licensed engine games, or even your own stuff?
PS: Nup. The whole nature of TC's is that they have to use our code. Once somebody comes out with something completely different to where we're going then we'll start worrying, but the fact of the matter is that everybody has to be dependant on us for updates to get to where they're going. To me that puts us in a position of being able to dictate where it goes. If it's a matter of content or better art, that's great, it compels us to do even better for the next project. I like them, I like the competition. I'm really amazed at the devotion of the TC people because they obviously go through some major hoops to get their TC to the point they're at.

PCPP: You must get tons of suggestions from fans, do you try and take any of it onboard?
PS: We try and take all of it onboard! When we released the Qtest I had about 900 emails in 3 days. I listed them all, prioritised them and tried to answer as many as I could. A lot of them were pretty redundant,which made me happy. You could basically divide them into 30 different issue. That's pretty impressive, it's not a wide range of things they have problems with, it's pretty specific. So we addressed this, things like sprite explosions. I had another 300 frames of animation to add to the basic character, because personally that's what I get the most feedback on. A lot of feedback on the weapons, the weapons were too slow, it took too long to swap weapons so I chopped out a few frames of animation. So we take all the feedback we get from the fans very very seriously, these are the people that are going to buy the game so it's ludicrous to take on this arrogant tone and say "screw you guys, we're going to do what we want to do."

PCPP: Do you follow the newsgroups?
PS: Oh yeah. I don't take them very seriously, but I still follow them.

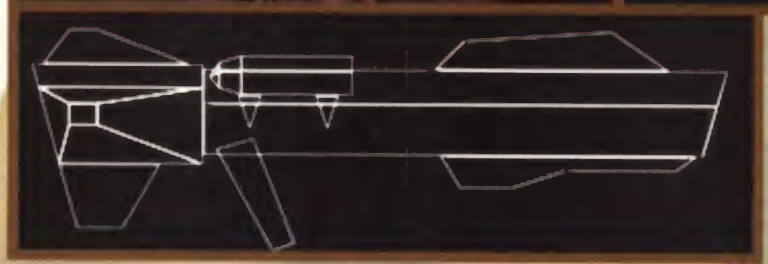
PCPP: You've managed to keep a reputation of credibility despite unbelievable scrutiny from fans, and despite an unprecedented level of openness, are you very image-conscious?
PS: No. We are who we are, what you see is what you get, iD's about attitude. We have an attitude to be the best and produce the products everybody wants to copy. That ain't gonna change.

PCPP: Does having a loose-cannon like Brian Hook out there pissing people off make you nervous?
PS: It's a Brian Hook issue, that's just his type of personality. If he feels like he's being attacked then he feels compelled to defend himself. He gets a little bit overboard sometimes, but it's just the way he is. At iD we respect everyone's personality as long as they contribute to the whole. The day that Brian Hook stops contributing to the success of iD is the day that Brian Hook won't be there. So until that day comes he can pretty much say what he wants. Prudence is a good thing either way, you really shouldn't attack other companies because you're not beyond reproach yourself. It's just the way the guy is.

PCPP: Where does QW fit into the corporate strategy? Are Activision supporting it?
PS: Quake World as far as I know is autonomous. The iterations it has is that it kind of belongs to itself. Quake World is an enhancement of Quake. If there's a Quake 2 World then it'll grow and evolve, but it's in no way connected to anything commercially that we're doing with Activision, as far as we know.

PCPP: Is it possible the Carmack stand against Direct3D will ever be relaxed, so mil-

"iD's about attitude. We have an attitude to be the best and produce the products everybody wants to copy. That ain't gonna change."



"We asked a lot of our playtesters what their favourite weapon was and none really said the same thing. We want to rely on individual skills rather than who gets the Rocket Launcher first."

lions more can enjoy hardware accelerated Quake/2?

PS: It's just bad! Just bad! Microsoft is just dead wrong! OK, they are wrong in not acknowledging the fact that Direct3D is just bad in every way. I'm just an artist on the periphery, but what it's come down to is a pissing contest between Microsoft and John Carmack. John is a very thoughtful, intelligent person, he's not going to commit to something that's a bad idea based on pride. Microsoft's committed to Direct3D based on pride. Microsoft calls the shots, so they will never admit they aren't right.

PCPP: Do you have any idea how many Quake players play hardware accelerated, as opposed to software only?

PS: We don't have any hard numbers, but we're going to sell a lot of hardware accelerators with Quake 2! The difference between the two products is pretty astounding. I'm the type of guy that'll turn off the interpolation on the textures just so I can see the detail! I'll play high res. and GL just so I can have coloured light. It's like Sound Blaster back in 1992/1993, people actually debated whether or not they should have a Sound Blaster in their machine. It's just ludicrous, you've just got to have a 3D accelerator, it's just a matter of who you pick. I've got to believe that in 2-3 years from now it'll be hard to find a computer without a 3D accelerator in it.

PCPP: Do you think the PowerVR poses a threat to the Voodoo?

PS: PowerVR doesn't give you coloured lighting. It does improve your performance but there are still some issues there about optimising it and taking advantage of all the technical benefits of it, but we do support PowerVR.

PCPP: What do you think about the whole "console vs. PC" thing?

PS: If the console people don't get with it they're going to get blown out of the water. PC's are going to really quickly pass up consoles. With the 3D accelerator card it's revolution time. You don't see a Playstation 2 just around the corner, you don't see a Nintendo 128 coming out anytime soon. That's what hampers a lot of development of PC games onto consoles - they just can't handle our games, 3D accelerator cards can.

PCPP: Thanks to Quake we now have a new phenomenon in the gaming world - player personalities, such as Killcreek and Thresh, how do you feel about this development as well as the large number of women gamers playing Quake?

PS: I think it's great. I've always been a really strong proponent of getting more women involved in gaming. I think Quake has done more for women in gaming than anything else out there. What has Barbie done? It's proved you can sell games to little girls, but has it made any celebrities? No. I've been doing computer games for about six years and the women I know in the business have always been trying to get the respect of the women players. The only time I've ever seen women get complete and utter respect from men in gaming is in Quake. People are afraid of Killcreek and Cornelia and all the other women out there who take their craft very seriously.

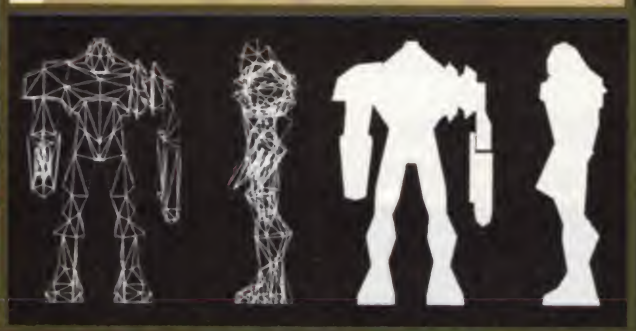
PCPP: I guess Quake is the antithesis of what your average marketing type would think a girl gamer would want to play...

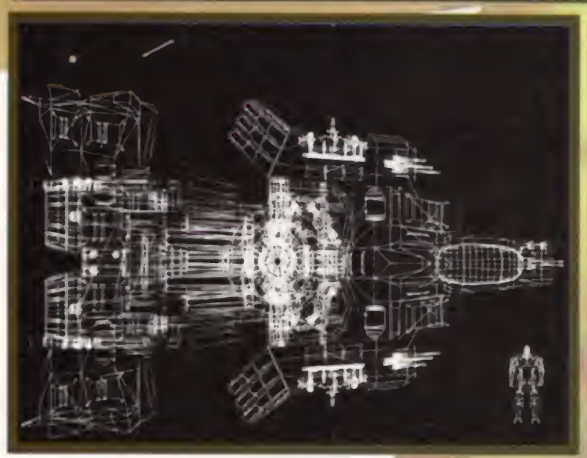
PS: Right. See, that's what their mistake is, they're trying to stereotype the girls into a Betty Crocker type of mould. There's even scientific evidence showing that women are becoming more visually-oriented like men. They want to be stimulated visually and they want to be able to compete with males on an even playing field. I think Quake is a good way for that to happen. Look at the all-girl Quake tournament, it's a legitimate thing. I think the celebrity status of these women is well deserved.

PCPP: Online gaming exploded with Quake, how do you feel about so many people living in the world you create, night after night, year after year?

PS: I think it's awesome. It's the closest thing we have to virtual reality. I'm a big fan of William Gibson and that's what it is. You're interacting with other people on a really basic level. What Quake 2 has done now is, I've done a lot of gestures in the game, you wave to people, you point, you can salute. There's a communication issue happening here which is just a drop in the bucket when compared to what's going to happen with Trinity. Or whatever next game company comes out with the next, greatest thing. It all revolves around communication and being able to communicate with fellow humans, whether it's across town or across the country. It's cool.

PCPP: Do you feel the simplistic world of killing you've created will be able to cut it in the long term against more sophisticated online environments such as Ultima Online?





"What it's come down to is a pissing contest between Microsoft and John Carmack. John is a very thoughtful, intelligent person, he's not going to commit to something that's a bad idea based on pride. Microsoft's committed to Direct3D based on pride. Microsoft calls the shots, so they will never admit they aren't right."

PS: We don't feel any pressure. iD has defined the genre of the first-person shooter and will continue to do so. What we understand is evolving the genre and coming up with the next paradigm that will distinguish it from an RPG. We don't want to become an RPG, we won't become an RPG, but with the inclusion of the cinematics and cut scenes we're addressing the story issue, trying to make it a more fulfilling single-player experience. In terms of a fast paced action game it won't change, it won't become a deeper meaning than to overcome your enemy.

PCPP: What have you put in there to make it a better single-player experience?

PS: A sense of environment, a sense that you're in a place as opposed to just some randomly generated place, that allows you to use some skill. When you play Quake 2 you're on an alien planet and you're there to vanquish your foes. That is what your goal is, and when you win, you win. You have no doubt you're part of a military operation on an alien planet and you're there to kick some alien ass.

PCPP: What about the new female character?

PS: She's cool. All the women Quake players

I know have really taken to her. She's tough. She's attractive, but she's tough. It's realistic! She has armour and attitude, when you see this character you'll have no doubt she's tough. It's all done out of respect to women. A lot of people were worried that we'd have some Pamela Lee Anderson in a metal outfit kind of character, but that just goes against our grain. We try to make as realistic as atmosphere as we can, but also want to give it that fantasy/Sci-fi fun element.

PCPP: Is there somewhere you draw inspiration for the characters, or are you trying to do something new?

PS: Whatever's cool. We talk to each other and the only thing that dictates what goes on the screen is what's cool. If any one person at iD thinks it isn't cool then we change it until everyone agrees it's cool.

PCPP: Why'd you lose the satanic images from Quake 1?

PS: The person who dug that left. Let him do that at his company. I like science fiction. Religious connotations, I think, don't have a place in games, unless you're making a game about religious things. We're trying to specifically define the genre we're working. This time it's Sci-fi, next time it could be, whatever. There's no need to try to create controversy, to create more sales through satanic images because we know it's going to run against a lot of people's grain. We're very much like the James Cameron Aliens thing, which is just go go go, kill the bad guy and move on.

PCPP: In Australia and New Zealand we're currently up against the OFLC (censorship board) who take a dim view of any game with excessive violence, Quake was synonymous with that, could that have been another reason why you removed the satanic elements?

PS: It didn't fit the storyline we had proposed and built our game around, so it wasn't included in the game. It just seemed that a lot of the demonic references were gratuitous because the person that created them thought it was neat and so decided to put them in the game, but it had no place in the whole. Kevin Cloud, our object director and my fellow artist, he was very specific that if it doesn't apply to our general plot, then it won't be in the game. So the emphasis was that we are under seige from an alien race who we need to defeat and that was all that counted. They don't have any demons on their walls.

PCPP: The Quake 2 weapons are obviously nicely balanced, when Quake 1 was being designed was it planned that the Rocket Launcher would be so dominant?

PS: No, that wasn't intentional. With Quake 2 we asked a lot of our playtesters what their favourite weapon was and none really said the same thing. We want to rely on individual skills rather than who gets the Rocket Launcher first. Rocket jumping is still in the game, it's just not an overwhelming factor. You have all these new weapons that have their pluses and minuses and it all equals out.

PCPP: Are you happy with the AI in Quake 2?

PS: It's pretty much the same as Quake. You know, we laugh when we hear the term AI because there's no such thing as AI, there really isn't. It's just a matter of making you think they're doing things on their own when they're really not. Every game, even the upcoming Half Life is still a predicted set of responses to a situation. What we've tried to do is make those responses more realistic.

PCPP: Is there any part of Quake 2 that you did personally that you're especially proud of?

PS: Yeah, I'm proud of the intro. I like all my work! It's the best work I've ever done. It's just nice to feel like I'm part of this collective whole that any one part can point to another part and say we all make each other look good. It's a very strong team environment at iD, there's no primadonnas that we need to, like, walk on eggshells around. All of our work comes together from a whole that people are really going to dig.

PCPP: Do you guys get on Quake World and deathmatch much?

PS: No, with the development of Quake 2 we had pretty insane hours, with only three artists and four designers...

PCPP: What sort of games do you play?

PS: I like Quake, I like Quake a lot. I play Quake 2 because I'm kind of vain, I like to see my own work. I like Real Time Strategy games a lot. I really like Dark Reign, I like Warcraft, I like all the Blizzard games, I'm looking forward to Starcraft.

PCPP: Aren't we all... On to Trinity, what can you reveal about your next project?

PS: Trinity is going to be to Quake what Quake was to Doom, we're really anxious to make that leap. The ideas and the approach that John Carmack has are completely different and separate to other developers. You have to understand that with iD we are completely in the loop with all the hardware advances coming down the pipe. John - and I'm not exaggerating or blowing sunshine up his ass, but the guy is a genius, he's the real deal. I've worked at Origin with some of the very top programmers in the industry, and John Carmack, he's not about flash, he's about substance and he wants to make Trinity the next evolution in our genre. It will advance the technology just like Quake did. People will have to upgrade their machines to play Trinity, but it won't come out until Christmas 1999.

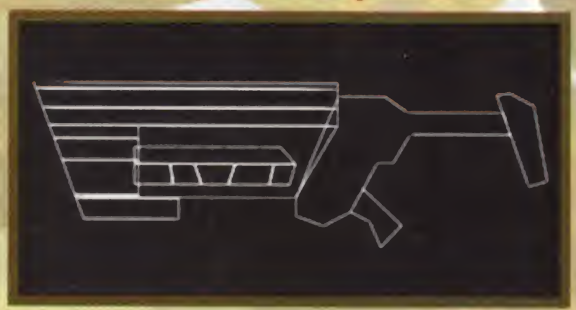
PCPP: Can you fill us in on any specifics?

PS: Personally a lot of what I'm looking forward to is the animation base, I want to center all the animations of the characters on the feet, so that there's no sliding feet, it's like a pet hate of mine, I hate seeing feet sliding around. I want real-time physics so there's a sense of weight. Things like a wall you see in the distance, as you get closer all the lines, all the detail all the scratches become geometry, based on your proximity to what we call the level of detail. Dave Perry with Messiah has touched on that, but the position he's taking to it is different to the way we're doing it. We're interested in re-thinking the way games are seen, the way they're played. Again, we're looking for the next paradigm that will help define the genre further. We know people want the next best thing, but we don't agree that the RPG is the next iteration of action, I mean, there's RPG games and there's action. They're very distinct genres, so we're really interested in using Trinity to take it to the next level.

To be honest it's all in John's head. The things I'm interested in are artistic things like Specular Mapping - seeing a metal object and thinking it's a metal object. Level of detail, more animation, more cinematic type things, which will happen. But only if they augment the gameplay as opposed to detract from the gameplay. I worked on Wing Commander 3 and 4 and they made you wait to play the game to see the cinematics. What we want to do is make the cinematics an integral part of the gameplay, without one you don't have the other.

I really can't say exactly how it's all going to be, that's what's great about iD, we're very much a collaborative effort and as things progress it'll just get better, it has too, if it doesn't get better then we won't do it.

"We're looking for the next paradigm that will help define the genre further. We know people want the next best thing, but we don't agree that the RPG is the next iteration."



ACCELERATE NOW!

128

The fastest 2D-3D accelerator card

WINNING PERFORMANCE

- True 128-bit Multimedia Engine for Maximum Performance
- 4MB of 128-bit SGRAM Memory with 1600MB/sec bandwidth
- MPEG-2 Compatible Digital Video Engine Supports DVD Theater or other MPEG-2 Data Streams
- 230MHz RAMDAC supports flicker-free high refresh rates up to 160Hz and resolutions up to 1600x1200
- STB Multimedia Hub Architecture™ with support for high resolution SVGA monitors, flicker-filtered NTSC/PAL television and high quality S-Video output
- AGP or PCI bus

3D FEATURES	VELOCITY 128	Millenium	Mystique
Flat & Gouraud Shading	•	•	•
Point-Sampled Texture Maps	•		•
Bilinear Texture Filtering	•		
Trilinear Texture Filtering	•		
Perspective Correction	•		•
MIP-Mapping	•		
Z-Buffering	•	•	•
Alpha Blending	•		
Video Texture Mapping	•		•
Fogging and Depth Cueing	•		
Double-Buffering	•	•	•

STB
Professional Graphics

VELOCITY 128

MULTIMEDIA ACCELERATOR

DISTRIBUTOR
ALFA COMPUTERS

ALFA
Tel. 02- 93173344
Fax 02-93173859

http://www.alfa.com.au/stb

PC WORLD BEST BUY

PC WORLD TOP 10 #1 Accelerator

Available from
HARRIS TECHNOLOGY

WHERE DO GAMES COME FROM?

Games industry workers in profile, part 4.

by Brenda Garneau

THE SOUND GUY
CLINT BAJAKIAN

WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF THE FIRST SOUND CARD CAME THE FIRST "SOUND GUY," AND THE SOFTWARE INDUSTRY WENT WILD INTRODUCING NEW EFFECTS AND MUSICAL SCORES IN ITS GAMES FASTER THAN IT DARED INTRODUCE ANY OTHER "STATE OF THE ART" FEATURE.

Although changes in graphics, medium (disk or CD-ROM) or processing power evolve over the course of a year's releases, everyone, it seemed, had to have sound and had to have it now. As a result, the early years of game music and effects were, to say the least, something that would make Mozart cringe.

That is gig is up, however, and companies like LucasArts are at the forefront of composition and effects design. While hundreds of talented musicians wonder how they can make a buck from this new frontier of sound, people like Clint Bajakian are already working behind the scenes to do for your ears what animators do for your eyes.

In our continuing behind the scenes interview series, Clint tells you what you need to do to get in, what equipment you can learn on and look forward to using, and offers a rare look at the production behind LucasArts.

The Job

***PCPP:** Where did you get your start, Clint? Obviously, it's not really possible to work your way up a ladder to get to where you are.*

CB: Well, after some 10 years of formal music training , and some 4 years of having my own MIDI studio, I got a call to do some free-lance MIDI composition for LucasArts in 1991, starting work on Indiana Jones and The Fate of Atlantis and Monkey Island II; LeChuck's Revenge with Michael Land and Peter McConnell, co-composers.

PC PP: Were games always an interest for you?

CB: Though I worked mainly on music in a formal conservatory setting, I always had an interest in scoring for film and television. So, I acquired a MIDI production system in 1988, and did work for a number of amateur projects. Games, per se, never crossed my mind. At the time, I was trying to make a choice between Academia and Hollywood when the phone rang offering me a shot at games, which I gladly took.

PC PP: When it's you, a project, and silence, what process do you go through to get the effects and the music?

CB: I talk to the project leader months before I actually start working on the project to get an idea what he or she is after. Then, over the next few months, I think about the project and come up with the main structure, both technically and creatively. It is in this phase that the work really gets done - the process of actually creating it, and incorporating it into the game is really just the battle with technological hurdles to arrive at as close a realization of what I had in mind as possible.

Throughout a given project, I constantly question where I am in comparison to the "vision" of where I want the project to be when it's done. Then, I translate the answer to that into a specific production procedure. By doing this day to day, even hour to hour, I maintain a true course towards my creative goals, building in a concern for budget and schedule.

PC PP: What's a typical day for you?

CB: I get in around 9:00 a.m., read and write email, then begin production work on my Macintosh. I spend the day alternating between communicating with others on the production team and doing the work alone in my studio with the door shut.

PC PP: Granted, this is all professional stuff, but what kind of equipment do you work on?

CB: I do all my audio and MIDI work on the Macintosh using Pro Tools and Sound Designer II by Digidesign to multitrack and edit audio, and Studio Vision by Opcode Systems to create and edit MIDI files. I use an Allen and Heath 16-channel mixing board with an Alesis Q2 multi-effects processor. For synthesizers, I have an EMU Systems Emulator IV, a Roland Sound Canvas and a Kurzweil K2000. I have a CD player for sound effects library playback, as well as a DAT tape deck. I frequently use the departmental portable DAT deck for field recordings. The department also has a sound studio equipped with a 32 channel mixing console and a rack of processing gear. Typically, a piece of music is created by sketching out a MIDI file in Vision driving the synthesizers, then selectively recording live instruments over the MIDI synths either in Studio Vision, or in Pro Tools with the MIDI sequencer slaved.

PC PP: What's a good basic set up for someone who is musically inclined who might want to experiment with digital composing and editing?

CB: A person can get totally up and running with the following gear: a computer, a MIDI sequencer, a synthesizer, digital audio application, preferably multitrack (that either contains a MIDI sequencing software, can import a standard MIDI file, or can be slaved to or from a MIDI sequencer), a MIDI controller (most typically a MIDI keyboard), a mixer (as simple as 8-12 channels), a microphone, an effects processor, and amp and pair of speakers. Often a MIDI interface is required between the computer and the synthesizers, though. To just get started doing MIDI composition, bypassing the whole audio side of things, simply a computer, MIDI application (MIDI interface, probably), MIDI controller, synthesizer, amp and speakers. That's all it takes.

PC PP: Having worked in the development side of the industry, I have seen buckets of tapes and resumes pass across my desk. So many, in fact, that it's impossible to listen to them all. How can someone clear themselves out from that clutter and get noticed?

CB: It's important to remember that if a company needs someone to do either part-time or full-time work for them, it is in their best interest to search hard to find the best person for the job. This means that they will do a great deal of listening through materials and actively evaluate their various strengths and weaknesses. Simply let your strengths exist on your resume and portfolio medium, and you can be sure they will spot your talent and ability if they truly need someone. In my opinion, and I have gone through portfolios, flashiness of presentation mattered nothing at all. It's always about the content.

PC PP: You mentioned sound effect libraries, Clint. How do you go about creating the sound effects? Do you use libraries or create your own?

CB: We combine library effects with our

own original recordings. If you need a bus driving by, chances are the quickest place to get it and begin editing is in an off-the-shelf commercial SFX Library. For many other sounds, the best place to go, and often the quickest, is to your own recording gear. Of the stuff we record ourselves, there are three main types: field recordings using the portable DAT deck, studio recordings using the quiet studio and gear, and in-office "desktop" recordings, using a microphone connected to your personal development system. For getting that sound of a bike patching out on gravel, the choice is obvious, get the deck and head out. For quieter, low noise floor critical stuff, or material that you need a lot of takes

of, it is best to use the sound studio, and often easier, given the efficiency of that facility once it's set up. But for simpler FX, often the best thing to do is just fire up your computer-based audio editor, and get that desktop mike going in your office. Effects like coins dropping on a table top, glass clinks, or simple Foley sounds are most efficiently whacked out at the desk, despite the presence of background computer noise threatening quality. For most of these simple sounds, the background noise is of no consequence.

PC PP: You ever do anything really silly to get an effect?

CB: Well, some of the more amusing and fun field recordings have been blowing up small amounts of gasoline that was later processed to be gigantic flare ups, or heading out to a beautiful beach on a sunny day to record surf and being paid for it! We've turned a bicycle wheel in a hot tub to create the menacing sound of a saw blade turning in a water trough, or recorded my kitchen cabinets creaking, and pitched them down for haunted house sounds. For human and even animal groups, we call the test department, who happily show up and chatter, scream, yell, stomp their feet, or even in the case of a Monkey Island "crowd" effect we needed, simulate the sound of an amused audience of monkeys.

PC PP: Game music has to walk a fine line, much like music in movies does. It has to influence the mood, but remain in the background. How do you manage to maintain that illusion... being there, but at the same time, not being noticed?

CB: You can't be sure how much time a person may spend in a given location where there may simply be a 2 or 3 minute loop of music. If the music were too "in your face," or present and attention-grabbing, the player would most likely turn it off, the ultimate failure for a game composer. It is important to compose the music for such sections of game play so that it enhances the mood and drama without competing for too much of the player's attention. After all, he's trying to concentrate on playing the game.

This is done through compositional means. Every aspect of music creation goes into this skill, from the concept to the final mix. There becomes a greater importance on the economy of an idea. A simple harp glissando with a high violin note can create an eerie, murky mood for prowling around in underground cisterns, dramatically enhancing the scene without commanding too much attention.

PC PP: What game stands out to you as the proper way to do things from a music point of view?

CB: Both The Dig and The Curse of Monkey Island employ a highly sophisticated means of controlling an interactive score dynamically in real time as the player moves around the various game environments and triggers various plot-forwarding episodes. These are both adventure games, which tend to cater to a greater level of musical development and variety than action games. There exists a layer between the game's host engine and the actual music files, the composer's script. This is so that the game can issue simple commands to the music script which in turn controls the music data files in a musical way. This approach maximizes the composer's ability to construct and test the score with special tools before having to play the game to see how it is all working. On the opposite extreme, I composed the score for the first person shooter, Outlaws, using a simple redbook data format, which is essentially CD tracks on the CD-ROM disk that are played just like a CD in "shuffle mode" while you play the game. I loved the approach, as it allowed me to focus entirely on music composition as opposed to splitting the focus between music production and interactive programming.

PC PP: You began in traditional composition and made the leap to computer game composition. Others might want to do the same. What's the biggest challenge in making that leap?

CB: The biggest challenge is that not only does the music have to enhance and meld with the story or current situation as it does in films, as opposed to being composed for its own sake, but it has to do so for an interactive unpredictable set of situations that can connect in any order and last for any amount of time. These interactive connections and unpredictable durations necessitate a very high degree of architectural planning as an added parameter to the conventional musical ones like melody, harmony, form, orchestration, etc.

PC PP: What are the biggest issues affecting your profession right now?

CB: I would say that limitations both in technology and resources have the effect of restricting what I am able to accomplish in terms of sheer scope. There are fairly strict limitations on the amount of data that can reside in memory, or be streamed off a CD-ROM in real time. Also, there are restrictions on how extensively I can produce a score in terms of budget and schedule. For example, I currently produce an orchestral score using synthesizers with a modest compliment of live players mixed in. As of yet, it's almost

The Stats

Age: 34
Company: Activision
Where before: LucasArts Entertainment Co.
Current Project: Curse of Monkey Island. (sound design)
Recent Projects: Daggerfall
Yrs in Industry: Outlaws (music), Mortimer (music), The Dig (sound design), Dark Forces (music & sound design)
Training: Five years undergraduate Bachelor of Arts degree in Classical Guitar Performance and Music Theory at New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. Three years Masters program at The University of Michigan in Music Composition, in Ann Arbor, MI. In addition to formal musical training including composition, orchestration, piano and guitar performance, conducting and theoretical studies, I owned and maintained a personal MIDI studio on which I did small amateur projects.
Average week: 44hrs
During crunch: 55 hrs
Your job motto: Achieve the highest possible quality that budget and schedule limitations will allow.

The Money

According to the Software Publishers Association's 1996 Salary Survey, the average salary is:
Sound Technician $44,900 to 43,100 US
The SPA did not have figures for composers, specifically.

The Mind

Singing in the shower won't get you far in this industry. You have to know music, hardware and software in critical combination. According to Clint, to do his job, you need an understanding of these points:

1. A musical talent and an ability to be expressive in many genres.
2. Musical skills including aural, theoretical, and compositional skills; instrumental is a plus.
3. Technical familiarity with post-production procedures, such as scoring video.
4. Familiarity with the following software: Two-track (stereo) Digital Audio Editing Software, on PC and Mac, preferably Mac; Multitrack Digital Audio Editing Software; MIDI sequencing software; and inter-application slaving between more than one audio/MIDI application, so that one controls.
5. Familiarity with the following hardware: Mixing Console; Multi-Effects Processor (reverb, chorus, delay, flange, pitch shift); Compressor; Basic Recording Techniques (miking, getting good levels, and clean sound); Synthesizers, Samplers; and MIDI Interface.

unheard of in this industry for a full orchestra to be employed every time an orchestral score is required.

PC PP: Suppose someone out there is at square one. How do you recommend they break into the industry? What's the best way?

CB: Obviously, it is necessary to get your face into the industry and take on any project possible to build a resume. Schmooze, go to the trade shows, apply to every company going, etc., all the while doing portfolio building work on your own. All that goes without saying, but there is something I see many young folks missing that really hurts them. To put it in "advice" terms: see to yourself first. Make sure you really are what you want people to think you are. If you want to be seen as a having fine composition chops, strong technical competency, a good instinct for organization and prioritization, and excellent collaborative/interpersonal skills, then make sure you have it all before billing yourself as having it all. All this may seem tough, but dedication makes it happen on its own in time. There's work for those who haven't yet become seasoned veterans. But again, a word to the wise: representing yourself as more than you really are is much worse for your chances of getting hired than simply making your services available, admitting you have a lot to learn, and expressing enthusiasm for the opportunity. People want to hire those who show general aptitude, a willingness to learn and an excellent disposition.

PC PP: I'm your friend. Be honest with me. Tell me what I should look out for if I decide to take employment in this industry.

CB: There are two main types of sound and music jobs in this industry, one that is steady and secure, the other that is erratic and unpredictable. Sometimes, an individual can't control when a company has to lay off employees, and one who is used to a good steady paycheck can quickly face the rigors of free-lance employment, which many prefer and can be lucrative. If you're into security, then there are some jobs in sound and music with it, but not all that many. Other than that, once in a company, there is little room for too much promotion when you are a sound/music person. It's not like management, in which, theoretically, a person could go "right to the top."

PC PP: Why would someone want to be a musician in the games industry more than anything else?

CB: Great amount of creative opportunity, working in a cutting edge industry that is defining a major new type of interactive entertainment in addition to film and television. Highly collaborative, work closely with a variety of professional people. Allows a great amount of creative growth on the job. When working in a company, there's a salary and benefits package in addition to the great experience of the work.

PC PP: Do you ever feel limited because your imagination can turn out scores/sounds that, once on the table, are too much to incorporate? Do you feel restricted by the "stay in the background" mentality?

CB: I don't feel limited at all, any more than I feel limited as a human being because I can't fly. It has to do with the nature of the job at hand. Many people get confused about what a composer really does in this industry. It is simplistic to say the composer composes. What he really does is manage a gigantic amount of details, creative, technical and procedural, in order to strike a balance between artistic intent and logistical limitations. This is really what a composer does, manage trade-offs in multiple domains against the clock.

The background aspect of game music is part of the job, part of a successful interactive score. To do the background stuff well is to do the job well. There is also plenty of "foreground" stuff as well, to be sure. It isn't all background. Composing for games actually isn't all that constricting to artistic freedom. It is frequently argued that games composition affords more freedom to the composer even than film, where the dramatic narrative can be carried so successfully by dialog and effects as to make the music more ancillary than it is in games. Hence, there is more "creative leeway" in games to be bold with the music and make a point.

To harbor artistic aspirations that exceed what the job allows to the point of frustration is simply a sign that the composer should look for other opportunities that will hopefully allow more artistic freedom.

PC PP: What's your take on the evolution on music in games. Right now, it seems that "art" is getting the most attention. Do you think that the industry will embrace a comparable quality for music and effects eventually?

CB: Music and sound are evolving wonderfully in the games industry these days. More and more attention is being devoted to it, and the expectation of it being high quality by the consumer is probably higher than it has ever been. In some ways, I think expectation of quality is higher in games than it is in television, which can only be responded to by the gaming industry by continuing to focus more resources on ensuring its increased quality.

The fact that graphics and art tend to receive a seemingly unfair amount of technical bandwidth in comparison to sound is largely a matter of the technological limitations. The limitations currently are fairly severe in comparison to what's coming down the pike, and yes, graphics tends to eat up more than it probably should in order for sound to have the impact everyone really wants and expects it to have. But this will change soon enough. Sound professionals are certainly pushing for as much bandwidth as they can, and will continue to do so into the days when there is enough bandwidth for everyone to be able to get across what they need to.

"It is important to compose the music for such sections of game play so that it enhances the mood and drama without competing for too much of the player's attention. After all, he's trying to concentrate on playing the game."

"YOU GOT IT OR YOU DON'T"

"First of all, talent is a must, and the old saying is probably true: 'you either got it or you don't.' Only you can decide this for yourself. You need to have studied music formally so you can have a solid base of skills in all the various aspects of music such as harmony, counterpoint, arranging, orchestration, instrumentation and form. You should have studied, and continue to appreciate, many different genres of music including classical, jazz, rock, pop, folk, and the music of diverse world cultures, and be able to produce music in as many of those genres as possible."

"*Test Drive 4* is the clear choice for **BEST RACING GAME OF 1997!"**

Official E3 Best Of Show Awards
-Gamepen

TEST DRIVE 4

Download the demo today at www.accolade.com

Sega·Ozisoft
PTY LIMITED A.C.N. 056 032 476

ACCOLADE

3Dfx interactive

G

Available NOW For Sony PlayStation and PC CD-ROM!

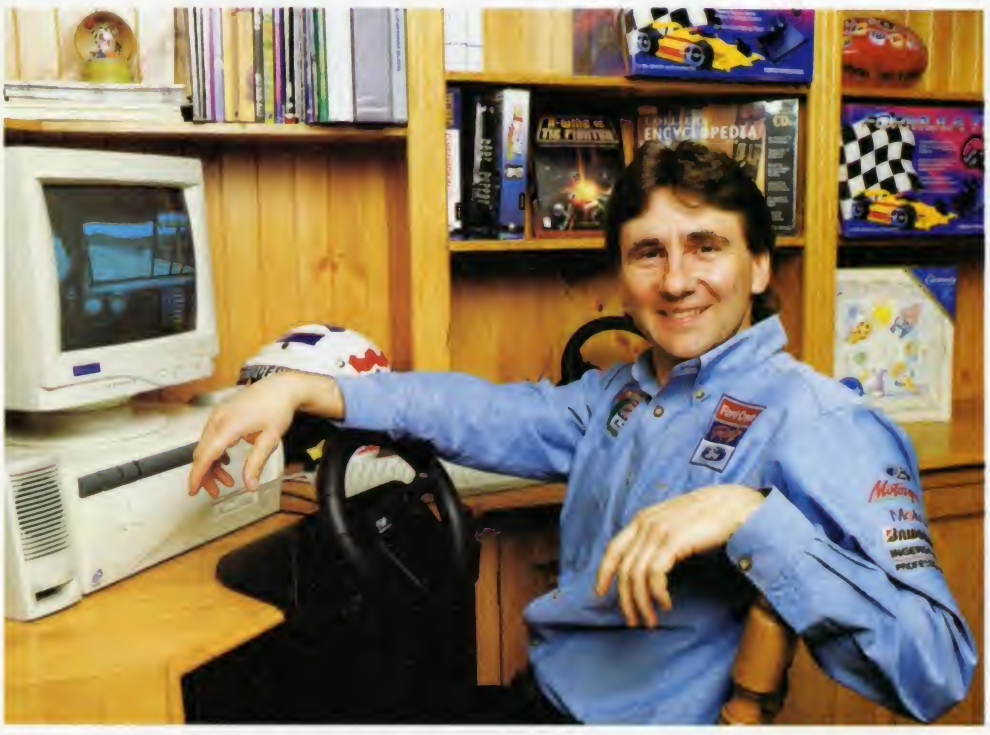
rive and Test Drive 4 are trademarks of Accolade, Inc. 1997 Accolade, Inc. All rights reserved, developed by Pitbull Syndicate. All other trademarks are of their respective companies. 3Dfx is a trademark of 3Dfx, Inc. Power a trademark of NEC, Inc. Rendition is a trademark of Rendition, Inc. Dodge Viper, Dodge Challenger, Dodge Charger, Plymouth Cuda and the Plymouth GTX are registered trademarks of Chrysler Corporation, U.S.A. and are used license. Chrysler Corporation 1997. "Nissan" and the "300ZX" are registered trademarks of Nissan. Reproduced by permission. The word "Jaguar", the leaping cat device, and the characters "XJ220" are the trademarks of Cars Ltd., England and are used under license. Chevrolet Chevelle, Camaro and Body Designs are trademarks of Chevrolet Motor Division, General Motors Corporation, used under license to Accolade, Inc. Pontiac GTO and Body are a trademark of Pontiac Motor Divisions, General Motors Corporation, used under license to Accolade, Inc. "Shelby Cobra" and associated logos and symbols are used under license. TVR is a trademark of TVR Engineering d. The TVR Cerbera and 12/8 are under license.

TAKE THE GALAXY BY FORCE.

Conquer the galaxy through military action, diplomacy or covert operations. With *Star Wars Rebellion™*, those are just a few of the ways to implement strategy and tactics on a grand scale – with control of the *Star Wars* galaxy as the prize. Command the Rebel Alliance or the Galactic Empire. Engage in spectacular battles. Earn the loyalty (or resentment) of some 200 planets. Play in real-time, in single play mode or two player mode over a network, the Internet or direct connect. Is the Force with you? Discover for yourself.

STAR WARS
REBELLION
TO CONTROL A WORLD · TO COMMAND A GALAXY
Exclusively distributed by
Metro GAMES
OFFICE OF FILM AND LITERATURE CLASSIFICATION
GENERAL
(8 YEARS & OVER)
LOW LEVEL
ANIMATED VIOLENCE
ZONE
play it on zone.com
for 2 players only
For Windows 95 CD-ROM
www.lucasarts.com
www.starwars.com
© 1997 Lucas. All rights reserved
LUCAS Arts

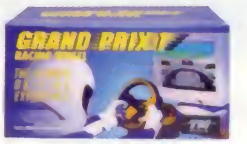
Winning lap.



Secret weapon.

Glenn Seton knows how to experience the thrill of racing, without leaving his lounge room. Thrustmaster is the most realistic driver controls and race car

simulation available, and it's the best way Glenn knows to get the winning edge. Thrustmaster gets you behind the wheel and on to



the racetrack, with features like padded steering wheels, dual clamping, additional dashboard buttons, and the ability to add

functionality and reality to all the hottest games. From control levers to realistic accelerator and brake pedals, Thrustmaster is the only 'race ready' driver control that gives you the competitive edge. After all, it's good enough for Glenn Seton.

The best drivers need the best equipment.

Exclusively distributed by Metro

Thrustmaster is a registered trademark of Thrustmaster, Inc. All other trademarks are the properties of their respective owners.

THRUSTMASTER®

THE FUTURE OF GAMING

The great debate. Single-player gaming or multiplayer/online.

In the beginning there was the single player game. The arrival of a new game meant a new world of discovery. For weeks we'd play the new game hard, and in time we'd begin to unravel the inner workings of the game engine. AI weaknesses would reveal themselves for our joyful exploitation. That was what is was all about. Smarter, more cleverly crafted AI meant for a longer playing time and rave reviews from us lot. It was the natural order of things, good and simple.

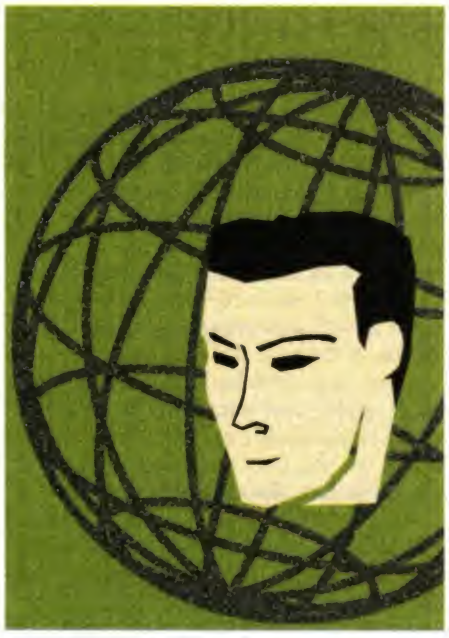
Then games started to appear with modem/serial cable multiplay built in. Very cool! We thought, but in the early days this advanced technology only seemed to work half the time. A 9600 modem, being itself a luxury piece of equipment owned by but a few.

Modems got faster and cheaper, more games began to support multiplayer and it started to get fun. One-on-one modem gaming. Bliss. It was an exciting new way to play, but only as a compliment to the real gaming - vs. the increasingly sophisticated computer AI.

Then it all went off. Homes with 2-3 networked PCs became much less rare. That was good, then there was the internet...

Now we can play in worlds unimaginable only a few years ago. Dozens of combatants playing fast and cheap in game worlds irresistible to the most die-hard solo player. The calls from a couple of years ago of "all new games need a multiplayer element to be worthy" were replaced with "I only play online".

But not everybody wants to play the new way. A resurgence of quality single player experiences is turning the trend again. Or is it? PC PowerPlay's Deputy Ed. Gareth Jones argues the advantage of the multiplayer way, while David Wildgoose, who'se never short of an opinion barracks for the satisfaction only a single player game can deliver.



Single-player gaming.

David "The Solo Man" Wildgoose

Picture the scene. You've just logged on to one of the best known online role-playing games for the first time. You slip into a leather tunic and pull on a pair of sturdy, but worn boots. While adjusting your belt, you twirl a small dagger between your fingers before carefully placing it into the scabbard at your side. And, finally, with your hat cocked at a jaunty angle you are prepared to venture outside. Hailing a couple of passers-by with the intent of asking them for directions, you overhear the following conversation:

"...Nooooo! This thing's already crashed four times today..."

"Same here, and I've only been playing the damn thing for an hour! Useless servers!"

A future still far away

This is the future of gaming we're being promised. Log on to the Internet and experience gaming glory like you've never dreamed of. Single-player, no-friends games are dead! Ha! Suck on that, socially-inadequate geek-boy! It has become almost an unquestioned truth in gaming these days that online or multi-player games are inherently superior to the single-player companions. Titles designed almost exclusively for Internet, network or modem play are praised for such efforts, while those made for the solo player are criticised for not having decent multi-player facilities. I'm sure you would agree that there appears to be something of a double standard operating here. Let's look at an example. How about the perennial Quake or Duke Nukem debate? Although an old argument, I think the solution best demonstrates the dichotomy represented by these games. It's my thesis that it really is pointless trying to compare two such radically different titles.

Hang on, was that "radically different"? Did I actually say that Quake and Duke Nukem were "radically different" games? Of course I did. Admittedly they do display a certain obvious superficial similarity (you have a 1st-person view, you shoot creatures with guns), but beyond that it's tough to uncover any meaningful common ground. Quite clearly, both games are brilliant when you play them as they were always intended to be played. That is, Quake in multi-player, Duke in single-player, and for the obvious reasons. The trouble begins when you try to play them as they were only ever half-intended. And it is here that both are exposed as majorly flawed. In single-player, Quake is too short, dull, repetitive and lacking in variety. Multi-player Duke suffers from severely unbalanced weapons and sprawling, inappropriately designed levels.

Broader range of experiences

As a consequence of this difference then, the two games offer drastically divergent gaming experiences. This is the important point. It is more the type of experience available that distinguishes single and multi-player gaming, rather than any great gulf in the quality of that experience. Is single-player Duke better than multi-player Quake? Is multi-player Seven Kingdoms better than single-player Civ 2? Who knows and who cares. It's not the issue. What I think is the issue, and the reason why reports of the death of the single-player game are greatly exaggerated, is the fact that solo gaming provides a much broader range of experience than any form of multi-play. Certainly this is the case at present, and will no doubt continue to be so for quite some time. In fact, as I stated in my RPG feature some months ago, multi-player games, particularly online ones, face what I see to be irreconcilable problems when it comes to being anything much more than head-to-head combat.

Multi-player gaming is perfectly suited to a number of game genres. These are those highly competitive and highly structured styles of games, in which the game universe is strictly defined in certain obvious ways. I'm thinking here of strategy, shoot 'em up and racing games, where the aim is always to beat or kill the other player/s. Yet whenever the game consists of more than just its engine, more than some lines of code, multi-player gaming fails. When there is plot, characters, dialogue, motives, etc, to consider, multi-player gaming fails.

the best single-player games are at least as good as the best multi-player games because of the greater breadth of experience they deliver.

Single player games can and do manage to combine both. Jedi Knight and the Terminator games give you the intense action of a deathmatch with the added attraction of being situated within a coherent world and propelled by a relevant plot. You can play all the isolated, one-off head-to-head games of Incubation or Starfleet Academy you wish, but, without the depth of their single-player story to flesh out the game world and give you a reason for what you are doing, you're left with only half of the full experience they offer.

Poor AI = great multiplay

It is true that many games are better against a friend than by yourself (Quake, Red Alert, Micro Machines, amongst others), but this is without exception due to poor AI or a slim single-player challenge. Flaws in a game's AI which can be exploited by the solo player will ultimately detract and even ruin the game. Multi-play is certainly one easy way to compensate for this, although, as the hacking of Diablo proved, other flaws are equally open to exploitation. Also multi-player options are increasingly often no more than a convenient replacement for weak solo games, as if the designers were too lazy or too incompetent to create something demanding.

That's fine when the game in question is intended and marketed in such a way (Worms is a prime example), but when it isn't then a lot of people are disappointed and disillusioned (X-Wing Vs TIE-Fighter lost out here to some extent). Developers can no longer simply design a game in one direction (multi or single-player) and then expect the other to take care of itself. It didn't work for Diablo (moving from multi to single-player), nor did it work for Descent (from single to multi-player).

So, in terms of strategy, shoot 'em up and racing games, the best single-player games are at least as good as the best multi-player games because of the greater breadth of experience they deliver. When it comes to role-playing and adventure games, single-player games are streets ahead. Ultima Online is a valiant attempt at something different, but it is doomed to failure. Not only because it was released in the US in an unstable beta-state are plenty of subscribers up in arms over the game. Newsgroups are full of loud complaints that it is nothing like what Origin promised.

And then there's Pkillers...

Ultima has a fine history, but playing UO you would never notice. The novelty of actually living (if it can be called that) in some of the famous towns wears off quite quickly. Pkillers wreak havoc. There's no story. "Events" are merely the sudden appearance of hordes of monsters in a particular region. No one role-plays. Instead, conversations are limited to exhorting the frustration of regular game crashes and the lack of anything much to do, especially once you've maxed-out all your skills in the first couple of weeks of playing.

Sure, UO does sound like a great idea in theory, but in practice it's not working at all. Perhaps in time it will improve and we may well look back on it in much the same way we think of, say, Wolfenstein, I don't know. Right now, however, I'm far more excited about the release of The Dark Project or Baldur's Gate than a local UO.

After I've finished Fallout, that is. Oh, and Tomb Raider 2. And X-Com Apocalypse. And Blade Runner...

Multiplayer gaming.

Gareth "Will you play with me?" Jones

OK, so here's a quick question to get things started. What games are you playing now? Probably three or four relatively new ones, I would guess. But I'll bet that there are also two or three old perennial favourites that you dig out and still thoroughly enjoy. And I'll go even further and bet that at least most of these old favourites (along with your current crop of favourite games) are multiplayable, and that this is the reason they're still on your drive. Duke Nukem 3D? Geez, I haven't even thought about that for a year or so. It's been gathering dust ever since I finished playing it single player and realised how woeful it was multiplayer. But take Quake for starters - now I'm the first to agree that as a single player game Quake lacked a fair bit, and when you think about it, it also lacked quite a bit in the multiplay department (one word - rockets). But still, and admittedly with no small thanks to the thousands of ingenious people that created mods and TC's for Quake, it was a perennial favourite in the multiplayer stakes, and the only reason for it's decline is the sublime sequel, Quake 2. The point I'm trying to make, my thesis if you like those faux intellectual kinda words, is that while single player games can be interesting, great fun, and in many cases make up the bulk of playing time, multiplayer games are where things really take off.

Competition? What competition?

Let there be no mistake about it, playing a game multiplayer and playing a game by yourself are two very different experiences. Single player games do allow for the player to become immersed within the gameworld, interacting (sort of) with computer generated characters, and following their quest, whether that be to find the amulet of supreme bowel control, to take down Shar-ke'-tan-the-nastiest-devil-of-them-all along with his minions, or to conquer absolutely the forces of the opposing commander. Within single player games the player is the centre of the universe, without them it ceases to exist and even allowing for player immersion, there must always be a realisation that the computer characters are there for the player and nothing else. Single player games are, for the most part, a completely different experience because the player is cocooned within their own roles, they are playing in their own world. It's an ultimately reductive world though - there is only so far one can go, and here we begin to reach the real depth of the question at hand. The question is what do you want from a game? Judging by the popularity of certain games, the most popular ones all feature at least one thing in common - competition. Red Alert, Diablo (why Pk'ers? Competition, machismo, the 'I'm better than you' attraction), Quake, and just about every sport sim known to man - they all feature competition. Sure you can deal with the AI as a practice session, but as a single adversary the AI can never match up to you - so they usually cheat or make things easier for themselves and so on. It's just the way things are. Multiplayer games are players playing against each other through the opaque interface of the game - if the gameplay is balanced well enough then the interface really doesn't matter all that much - it all boils down to a straight conflict.

Ever played an RPG twice?

Ever since the dawn of multiplayer gaming it's almost always been about competition (though there are always exceptions to the rule - Gauntlet being an outstanding example from the olden days). Why? Well, people like to compete, obviously. Whether it's in the form of competing for a promotion at work, higher marks in school, a sports game of any variety, or anything else, we all seem to like (at least a little bit) to compete. And it's no secret that some of the most successful games (in terms of longevity and amount) have been fairly simple affairs. Sure, Quake as a single player game was drab, boring, and all too easy. Sure multiplayer games invariably ended with everyone going for the rocket launcher, sure it wouldn't have lasted as long or been as popular had the engine not been so versatile, but Quake has to be the king of multiplayer games by a wide margin. It was, as David so neatly pointed out, primarily a multiplayer game, and even with its faults excelled in this area. It's also the only game that's constantly on my hard drive, and still is to this very day. And here is one huge plus that multiplayer games have over (primarily) single player games - replayability. Adventure games are fantastic fun when they're done well - but the end result is that you finish them or get stuck and give up. It's over, and while you may want to play again to test out a few of the different endings (as is the current fashion), or start an RPG again with different character/s, in most cases once it's over it's over.

But to pull out Quake as an example of multiplayer predominance over single player games isn't really fair - Quake is more than a cut above the rest. Let's take another game that works both as a single player game as well as a multiplayer game - Master of Orion 2. Get four people playing together and watch the fireworks fly. Play single player, and watch how the interactional elements lose out badly. You can't talk to AI, you can't taunt, and even when you make fake alliances with them it's just not as much fun to turn around and backstab them when they least expect it. So you've proved you can lie to a machine, so what? Lie to another human, calm, cajole and commiserate with them until they trust you implicitly, then send in the fleet and rip their empire to shreds and the levels of satisfaction you'll gain are so very much higher, and you get to send messages to them taunting them for trusting you too. I love that bit.

...for a really challenging experience that's never the same twice, that challenges me to think up new and more devious ways to backstab someone, that requires me to take my opponent's thoughts into account rather than pretend that the AI is actually intelligent, I turn to multiplayer gaming.

Each to their own

But we're just running through the usual arguments - multiplayer gives much greater longevity to a game, doesn't encounter the same AI problems that single player games do, and enables players to taunt their opposition mercilessly. And then there's the single player arguments - single player games allow for greater immersion, for a more complete and believable world, for a storyline that unfolds and makes sense, and for players to take their time and think out responses to puzzles and problems. Fine, whatever. Each to his or her own, depending upon the mood you're in at the time. What it all comes down to, for me, is what I want from a game at that time. I do enjoy single player games quite a bit, but for a really challenging experience that's never the same twice, that pushes me to the limits of white knuckled concentration, that pushes my reflexes to the limit or challenges me to think up new and more devious ways to backstab someone, that requires me to take my opponent's thoughts into account rather than pretend that the AI is actually intelligent, I turn to multiplayer gaming. But like I said, not everyone wants that all the time - sometimes I enjoy something a little less challenging, sometimes I like single player games.

PC PowerPlay ULTIMATE HARDWARE

PC PowerPlay
Australia 1997
Apocalypse 5D

Apocalypse

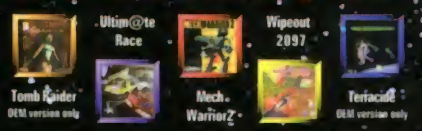
Now Incredible 3D Sound

Explosive Acceleration for 3D Games

VideoLogic now has it all, for extreme 2D/3D graphics, and 3D sound performance! Complete with exciting bundled software and at a price that won't break the bank.

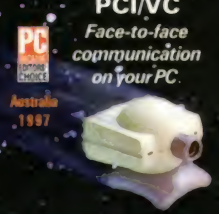
Your Needs	VideoLogic Solution
2D only	GrafixStar 600 Pro
2D/3D	GrafixStar 560 PCI GrafixStar 560 AGP Apocalypse 5D
3D only	Apocalypse 3Dx Apocalypse 3Dx *Value Pack* *(Games sampler only)*
2D/3D/Sound	Apocalypse 5D Sonic
True PCI 3D Positional Sound	SonicStorm
Video Capture/ Conference	Captivator PCI/VC

Apocalypse accelerators come with 5 FREE games*



Captivator PCI/VC

Face-to-face communication on your PC.



MULTI AWARD WINNING PRODUCT RANGE

Apocalypse 5D Sonic

The Ultimate Games Accelerator with 3D sound

Apocalypse 5D Sonic is the total gaming solution. Combining the 3D acceleration of Apocalypse 3Dx, the stunning 2D performance of GrafixStar 600 Pro, and the sensational audio quality of SonicStorm on a single PCI card; Apocalypse 5D Sonic turns your PC into a serious game system.

Apocalypse 5D

The Amazing 2D/3D Gaming Accelerator

Defining a new performance standard for single-slot 2D/3D graphics acceleration, Apocalypse 5D combines the arcade-level 3D performance of Apocalypse 3Dx with the 2D performance of the GrafixStar 600 Pro.

www.videologic.com
www.powervr.com

SonicStorm

Advanced PCI sound card for extreme 3D gaming

You've accelerated your 2D graphics, you've accelerated your 3D games, now it's time to accelerate your audio. SonicStorm brings the very latest in HiFi quality, PC'97 and AC'97 compatible audio to your PC. A true PCI sound card not just an accelerator that adds to existing sound cards, like others.

Apocalypse 3Dx

Explosive Acceleration for 3D Games

Now with improved image quality and even faster 3D, Apocalypse 3Dx brings arcade-level 3D games to your Pentium PC. Designed to run the latest 3D games, Apocalypse 3Dx uses the new NEC PowerVR PCX2 processor and 4MB of SDRAM on-board texture memory, to produce explosive acceleration for 3D games.

GrafixStar 600 Pro

Lightning fast 128-bit graphics acceleration

With immense processing power, the revolutionary GrafixStar 600 Pro (based on the Tseng Labs ET6100 128-bit graphics controller) produces lightning fast graphics and video acceleration for all your business applications and games.

GrafixStar 560

Complete low-cost 2D/3D graphics solution

Combining lightning-fast graphics and 3D acceleration, GrafixStar 560 is a single-slot PCI or AGP solution. Utilising the new Cirrus Laguna GD5465 64-bit mulitmedia acceleration for enhanced Windows 95 and games performance.

VideoLogic

Freecall 1800 067722

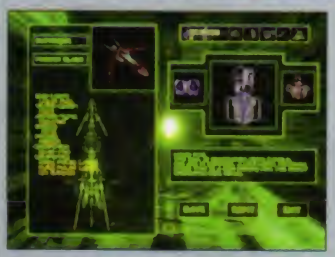
Fax (+613) 9722 2104. Email: videologic@c031.aone.net.au
Dealer/Regional Distributor enquiries welcome, tel (+613) 9722 2089

*Games may vary depending on availability

Errors and omissions excepted. All logos and trademarks are registered by their respective companies.

A.I - Alien Intelligence

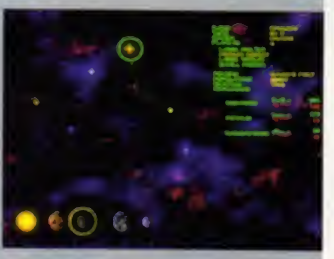
Category	Space RTS
Players	1-6
Publisher	Interplay
Available	TBA



Computer game truth no. 324. All technical readout screens MUST be in a bilious lime green

Pax Imperia, reviewed elsewhere in these pages, is one of the first games to take on the galactic strategy and conquest genre in a real time environment. But it won't be the only one soon, for A.I. Alien Intelligence will be cast from the same mould. The scenario is that an alien race has blown up your home planet, cutting you, the commander of an outlying colony, almost completely off. Your task is to rebuild up humanities name in the galaxy, expanding to other planets, using diplomacy and fighting with other races as necessary. Nothing all that special there, but the game does look quite promising. Huge and complicated research trees, bucketloads of animations with all items, ships and units rendered in 3D, 6 different alien species to deal with, 7 different ship hull types, 42 different hull designs, and an open ended structure which allows for a high degree of replayability.

The good news is that it will also be multiplayable, with up to 5 others competing at once, and there will be real time battles as well (a'la MOO2's battle sequences, from what we can tell so far). We haven't seen much of the game at all yet, but it's the gameplay that will make or break a game such as this - perhaps more so than with other genres. MOO2 showed just how exciting, cerebral, and addictive a game such as this could be - and if this real time version of the genre works well it's going to be a very popular game around here.



Battle off the coast of Chernobyl

M.A.X. 2

Category	RTS
Players	1-TBA
Publisher	Interplay
Available	Mid 1998

M.A.X wasn't a bad game, it was one of the few created that was different in the real-time genre - and kudos to the developers for that. MAX 2 is now on the way, and takes up where MAX left off.

The humans finally gained acceptance into the 'Concord', and it looked like things might eventually become peaceful and loving in the end. Not everyone was happy with the deal though, and some renegade humans broke the laws of the Concord, settling a colony in the outer reaches of known space. To make ends meet, the colonists start up a mining operation, but they accidentally discover some ancient alien technology. Of course, the alien nasties wake up, and a message is sent back to the mother-world resulting in a full scale galactic war starting on the outlying colony, moving towards the alien planet and finally ending up on Earth for the final battle.

For those not familiar with the way that MAX works, it uses a real-time turn based system, which probably sounds very confusing. Essentially, the deal is that you have a set time in which to make your moves, place your buildings, and develop your strategy - with your units moving in real time, and the opposition units reacting in real time as well. Once time is up, it's the next players (or AI's) turn, and so on. Sounds weird, but seems to work fairly well, and at least it's something different. This time around, developers have gone for a 3D world, allowing you to change the viewpoint to any angle you wish - and the developers are talking up the AI bigtime too. Apparently, it's very advanced and very adaptive - but as to whether both the AI and the game itself lives up to expectations, we'll have to let you know a bit later. Looks good though.

SPEED RALLY

So you've played Need For Speed and V Rally, now try

SPEED RALLY

MORE BUMPS, JUMPS, BANK TURNS, POWERSLIDES, COLLISIONS, THRILLS & SPILLS FOR YOUR PC

6 COURSES, 5 RACE MODES, 5 RALLY CARS, 6 PLAYER NETWORK

GRIT THE DIRT

3Dfx Interactive RECOMMENDED

PC CD ROM

G

Virgin INTERactive

© Virgin Interactive Australia. All rights reserved. Virgin is a registered trademark of Virgin Enterprises. Inc.

Descent: Free Space

Category	Space shoot-em-up
Players	1-TBA
Publisher	Interplay
Available	Nov 98

Parallax Software, creators of Descent and Descent II, have changed the Descent ethos almost completely with this one - in fact there doesn't seem to be any reason to call it Descent, other than to make sure everyone realises that it's the next incarnation of Descent. You're not descending this time, you see, instead the battle is waged in the middle of space where there really is no down, or up; just lots of space, and lots of cool looking spacecraft. So you're not descending into mineshafts, and you're not battling rampant mining bots either. The story is something like this; the Terrans (that's us Earth people, non Sci-fi fans) are in a war with some alien types called the Vasudans, and you as commander of a unit of the Terran space armada are set with the task of saving mankind, as per usual.

Graphically speaking, it looks like D:FS will be pretty spectacular. All the ships will be fully rendered, right up to the behemoth Capital ships that are going to take minutes to traverse, all in his-res graphics, and if Parallax's previous performance is anything to go by, there will be support for just about every type of 3D card on the planet too. In terms of gameplay, rather than a straight 'finish one mission, move on to the next' scenario, D:FS will feature a much more open structured system, with events from previous missions affecting the next, and a variety of possible endings to boot. It sounds pretty damn cool, and though we haven't actually managed to get our hands on a playable version, it looks like the same basic cockpit as Descent 1 and 2, and the same basic style of control too, which is probably a good thing.

In space, no one can hear you descend

The War of the Worlds

Category	RTS
Players	1-2
Publisher	GT Interactive
Available	Sometime

OK, firstly, a qualifier. We know almost nothing about this game as yet. As we go to press, GT won't even acknowledge its existence on their web page and the developers, 'Rage', don't seem to have a web site. But still, from what we have seen and heard, this could be quite good. It is another RTS game, which may weigh against it, but it does feature all the latest advancements like true 3D terrain, a viewpoint switchable to any angle, and effects like light sourcing, a dynamic particle system and others.

The deal is that you take on either the Martians or the Earth people as the legendary battle takes place, though there will not be a set mission structure to follow - instead the game will evolve depending upon the players actions. Unfortunately, we can't say much more than that, because we just don't know, but as soon as we get some more information we'll be sure to let you know.

The chances of anything living on Mars were a million to one... but still, they're coming!

Some Say Role Playing is Dead...

Experience the Rebirth of a Legend

Might and Magic VI

THE MANDATE OF HEAVEN

NEW WORLD COMPUTING, INC.

ENTERTAINMENT SOFTWARE

STUDIO 3DO

Directsoft Australia Pty Ltd holds the exclusive distribution rights to Might and Magic VI in the territories of Australia and New Zealand.

New World Computing, The New World Computing logo and Might and Magic are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of The 3DO Company.
All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. © 1997 The 3DO Company. All rights reserved.

DIRECTSOFT AUSTRALIA

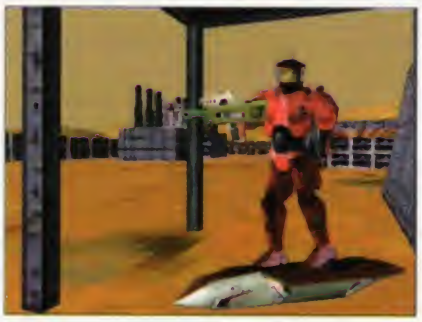
P.O. Box 658
Wahroonga NSW 2076
Ph:(02) 9482 3455
Fax:(02) 9482 3650
Email: info@directsoft.com.au

10six

Category	Online action/strategy
Players	Millions
Publisher	Segasoft
Available	May 1998

10Six (despite a name which makes just about no sense whatsoever) might be one of the great online games of the near future - it comes from a good pedigree, boasts some pretty cool graphics potential, and in sheer size and scope will blow many of the others out of the water. 10Six is loosely based upon the classic C64 game, M.U.L.E., where players each grabbed a plot of land at the start of each round, then developed and exploited the materials from that plot for sale on the open market. M.U.L.E. was a fantastic blend of action, strategy, and economic supply and demand marketeering, but can you imagine M.U.L.E with present day fancy schmancy graphics and processor power put to use, in a world with one million land plots, all played online with up to a million people? That, supposedly, is 10Six.

But that's not all, Segasoft understand the average gamer, and they know we want violence and direct competition, so they're going to add in the ability to take over another's plot of land by force, as well as allowing players to form clans and societies so that their land is protected the whole time the game runs. And this would seem to be a big hurdle for Segasoft to jump over, just how to make this work in a way that's fair to both casual and hard core players, as well as maintaining the long term viability of the game. That's not the only problem though - at present Segasoft are saying that there will be up to one million people worldwide taking part. Now, that would break all records for a game, and there has to be a big question mark over whether changes will be have to be made to the design (separate worlds with a thousand plots each perhaps?), but we'll let you know as this game develops further.



(above) Polygon chick rides a Speak-and-Spell

Xfire

Category	Top down shoot-em-up
Players	1-TBA
Publisher	Sir-Tech
Available	1st Qtr '98

Sir-Tech have been around for a long while, and though they haven't really become one of the giants of the gaming industry, they have been pumping out quality releases for a long while, including the Jagged Alliance series, the Wizardry series, and the Riva series. They've also branched out into other genres, and Xfire (which we assume should be pronounced 'cross-fire') is a relatively new style of game for Sir-Tech to deal with. However, it does look like a good one, and is yet another game that is strongly focused upon internet play (either co-operatively or deathmatch style) through a dedicated and free server.

It's set in one of those 'galaxy far far away' kind of places, where two factions have emerged with radically different ideologies. One, 'The Genetics' find all technology to be anathema, while 'The Puritans' think that technology is way cool, man, and should be embraced as the divine way (or something). So, of course, they both decide to kill each other a lot, and you get to choose either side in two long campaigns to achieve dominance. Thus far, we've seen very little actual gameplay of Xfire (well, actually none), but it looks like a top down isometric shooter in the mold of the Crusader series, though it looks to be a lot faster paced. A large variety of weapons are promised, and lots of innovative ways to kill the opposition, as well as a hefty multiplayer section on the Xfire dedicated server. Taking a leaf from Sir-Tech Jagged Alliance book, Xfire will also include the very cool taunt feature - with the added bonus of multilingual taunts, so if you're playing a Chinese person, they might hear 'ni hey say bunjow' - which would be very cool, and might make for some very fun translations.

Crusader meets Syndicate meets Diablo meets Jagged Alliance meets QuakeWorld. How cool is that? Very

Rekindle your youth

ARMY MEN™

Real Combat. Plastic Men.

Directsoft Australia Pty Ltd holds the exclusive distribution rights to Army Men in the territories of Australia and New Zealand.
3DO, The 3DO logo and Army are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of The 3DO Company.
All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. © 1997 The 3DO Company. All rights reserved.

DIRECTSOFT AUSTRALIA PTY. LIMITED
P.O. Box 658
Wahroonga NSW 2076
Ph:(02) 9482 3455
Fax:(02) 9482 3650
Email: info@directsoft.com.au

KKnD2 - Kollateral Damage

Category	Real time strategy
Players	1-8
Publisher	Beam Software
Available	2nd Qtr 98

Beam Software are still at it, and still going strong. One of their headline titles of last year was KKnD, a real time strategy game set in a post- apocalyptic nightmare scenario where some made it underground, and some remained on the surface becoming horribly mutated, and then there was the agricultural robots gone wrong who also want a piece of the pie (well, actually, they want the whole pie, as do all the others). So the three forces are pit against each other in KKnD2, all with new units, and the promise from Beam of new and innovative gameplay.

This time, they've gone with a Jagged Alliance style mission map, with sectors to be taken and defended from the other two forces, and so all 45 single player missions will be fairly non-linear in structure. The graphics, too, have undergone a revamp, and they now look even better than before - which is quite impressive considering how pretty this game was in it's original form. The much favoured RTS top-down perspective has been retained, and there will be support for both 640 x 480 and 800 x 600 resolutions. From what we've seen of the game so far, it really does look very impressive - some of the best graphics we've seen in an RTS game, without doubt.

There's three new terrains to deal with this time around too. You'll be battling it out in the highlands, in urban environments, and in the parched desert - and you'll be traversing the terrain in some new and rather cool units too. For the first time, KknD is going airborne, with a variety of urban units available as well as some amphibious and constructible units (i.e. they construct new units from themselves, I think). Also, Beam have obviously been thinking along the same lines as the guys from Auran, as they've included a nifty mission editor and a unit editor - so if for some reason you think a certain unit is too powerful, you can just drop them down a couple of notches until you're happy.

It's gameplay, though, where a game lives and dies, and apart from the inclusion of some now standard features such as a fog of war and true line of sight, KknD2 doesn't feel all that different from the original. The premise for all three armies is the same, build up a base, suck up oil from the ground for money, and create more units than the opposition, then go blow them up. Having said that though, the demo missions we've been able to play have been well paced and exciting scenarios with some pretty cool units. So if you're still hungry for some more RTS action in a very pretty environment, with wonderful mission briefing sequences and cut scenes, a unit and mission editor and what looks like plenty of gameplay, then KKnD might be just what you've been looking for.

Yet another RTS game... but this one's Australian. KKnD 2 is adding a variety of improvements to the original, but doesn't look like it's straying far from the tried-&-tested RTS fromula

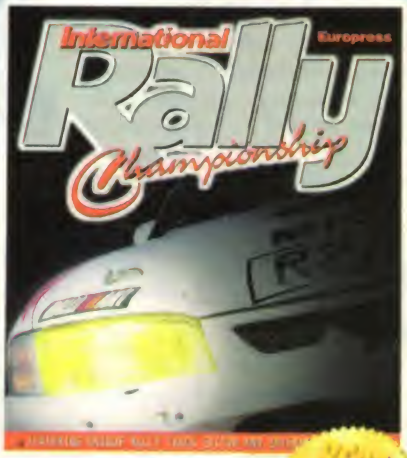
BIG BOX!

Europress

Total RACING

90% PLAY

BEST SELLER



89% PC FORMAT

BEST SELLER

93% PC ZONE

BEST SELLER

EVEN BIGGER VALUE!

NEVER HAS SUCH VALUE BEEN CRAMMED INTO A SINGLE BOX!

THE 3 TOP RACING GAMES OF 1997 IN THE ONE BIG BOX!

Get behind the wheel of the world's fastest supercars and prototypes in this high velocity racing game.

Each car is based on it's manufacturer's specifications for performance and detailed measurements.

As you race against up to 11 opponents on tracks from all corners of the globe, you feel the speed, handling and unique characteristics of each supercar.

Every location features it's own combination of environments - jagged coastlines, barren tundra, urban sprawl, humid rain forests, crisp alpine vistas and jungle!

MIN REQ: Pentium 90 with 16Mb RAM, Win95

The pure, gut wrenching thrills of world class motorsport roar onto your PC screen with Europress' latest driving simulation. International Rally Championship enables you to experience the true atmosphere of international rally racing from the dizzy mountain passes of Switzerland to the outback of Australia.

With a unique Track Editor, superb gameplay and 9 of the worlds best rally cars to drive, you will believe you are truely there!

Support for 3DFX cards via Direct 3D adds even greater speed and realism. Split-screen 2 player same PC, 2 player via serial cable and up to 8 players over a LAN.

MIN REQ: Pentium 100 with 16Mb RAM, Win95

In one of the most challenging and fastest PC racing games to date, you take control of the adrenalin pumping cars everyone wants to drive as you race your way across six formidable international courses.

Incredible real-time 3D graphics, multiple camera views and various racing styles including arcade, multiple and full championship modes make for a thrilling ride that can be shared with a friend as you go head to head on the same screen. Alternatively you can play against intelligent computer-controlled opponents with unnerving human behaviour.

MIN REQ: Pentium 60 with 8Mb RAM

AVAILABLE EVERYWHERE NOW!

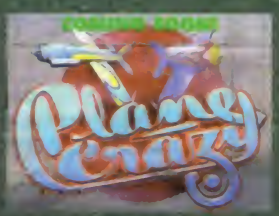
FROM

Europress AUSTRALIA

Europress Australia Pty Ltd
79 Silverwater Rd
Silverwater, NSW, 2128
PH:(02) 9748 4847 FAX:(02) 9748 2990
HELPDESK:(02) 9748 2163
EMAIL: sales@europress.com.au
WEB: http://www.europress.com.au

G

COMING SOON!



More info - Screenshots etc!
http://www.europress.com.au/plane_crazy

COMING SOON!

More info - Screenshots etc!
http://www.europress.com.au/xlr8

Riot: Mobile Armour

Category	First person shooter
Players	1-TBA
Publisher	Monolith/Microsoft
Available	Mid 1998

How would you fancy a manga-style first person shooter, rich in multi-pathed storyline, chock full of the latest graphics processor support (including the Voodoo2, quite probably), replete with gory and graphic manga explosions, all made by the same funsters responsible for 'Blood'? Sounds very nice indeed, and fan sites have already sprung up - including one on the Planetquake site, which should indicate just how highly regarded this title is.

In terms of storyline, it's your fairly typical Manga style affair of treachery, betrayal, big explosions, redemption, and really big eyes. Sanjuro Takeshi, your character in the game, was once a highly respected lieutenant in the Mobile Combat Armour (MCA) division, until his brother Toshiro goes the backstab on you for some reason, resulting in a court martial and a forced resignation. So, against this backdrop of friendly fratricide the scenario plays itself out, with you both avenging your wrongful dismissal, exacting retribution from your miscreant bro, and quite probably (if all goes well) saving all the universe from an untimely end.

Because we're talking about the usual anime style universe, the soldier of the future won't be tooling around in just his combat fatigues, instead you're going to get kitted out in a full body armour getup, sort of like a mini-mech suit. The bonus addition is that you can jump in and out of your suit during the game to enable access to tight areas and so on. Graphically, Riot looks amazingly good, with 3D motion captured movement, Monolith's proprietary 3D game engine, and absolutely lovely Manga style graphics. But don't be thinking that it's just for those weirdos that watch anime videos - Riot seems like it's going to be a good enough game to get any gamer interested. We certainly are.

Expect weapons and explosions that will put Turok to shame - it is manga after all!

Sim City 3000

Category	God Sim
Players	1
Publisher	Maxis
Available	Early '98

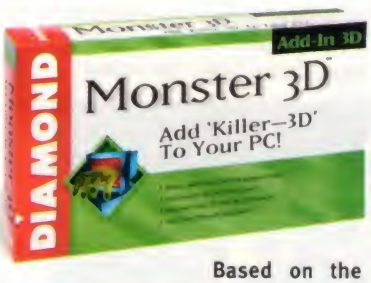
The Sim City series is one of the most legendary in the computer gaming world, and rightly so. Whether you were an aspiring city planner or just a control freak, there was acres of playability in both Sim City and Sim City 2000 (and even one or two of the follow up sim games) - and now SC3000 is looking even better. Maxis have got with the times and now they've gone with a 3D world, with true 3D graphics. In fact, this time you'll be able to jump down to a first person perspective and see what's really happening at ground level - now that promises to be a pretty cool experience, especially when you consider that you'll be able to interact with your denizens to see what they think (it looks like they'll be saying things like 'there's not enough public transport here, you bastard! I'm tired of walking', and such like). To help this feature work, Maxis have added greater flexibility in the way that you can choose to run your city. If you want to kick back, relax, and just watch things happen from street level, for instance, you can give greater power to your advisors and let them do the job, popping back up to 'god' level when you want to do something yourself.

Also, there will be greater flexibility in where you decide to place your buildings, and some of the more mundane tasks (like laying down powerlines) won't be such a burden anymore if you don't want them to be - you'll be able to automate the procedure. On top of this is the revamped economic model, where this time businesses will be competing against each other - lay down three petrol stations on the same corner, and a price war will begin with only one surviving business as the end result. This is really looking like it might be a great one - we'll keep you posted.

The big question is whether you'll be able to interact with your citizens in the same way that you could with Sim Copter...

Combine Monster 3D with Monster Sound and you'll experience "The Ultimate Gaming Experience!"

Diamond Multimedia make gaming so real it'll make you tense, anxious and screaming for more!



Are you ready to be chewed up, spat out and totally satisfied? Then brace yourself because the Diamond Monster 3D has arrived and it's about to blow your PC away with the ultimate in arcade-quality graphic performance.

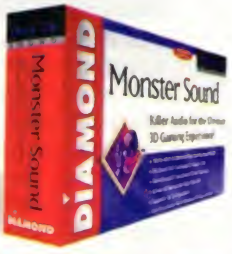
Based on the state-of-the-art 3Dfx Voodoo 3D accelerator, Monster 3D's advanced PCI-bus architecture works with your existing graphics card to transform your ordinary computer into a monstrous gaming machine. All for a price that'll make your head spin.

Monster 3D sets a new standard in 3D graphics performance with lightning-fast, full-screen 3D rendering and outrageous special effects, giving you gaming so real, it hurts. And, it's the fastest performing Microsoft Windows® 95 Direct3D accelerator available, with equally high-performance 3D in MS-DOS and Windows® 3.1x. Plus, Monster 3DXL comes bundled with Whiplash™/Fatal Racing™, VR/Actua Soccer™ '96, Descent™ II: Destination Quartzon 3D, MechWarrior® 2, Scorched Planet™, a Microsoft™ WIN 95 Sampler CD 2 and over fifteen other monstrous games that'll leave you begging for mercy.

And you better listen up, because if you're not experiencing Diamond Multimedia's outrageous Monster Sound 3D PCI sound card, you're really missing something. Monster Sound provides true CD-quality 3D positional audio—with up to 24 independent audio streams—and support for Microsoft's DirectSound and DirectSound 3D APIs. It also comes bundled with a suite of advanced audio applications. Monster Sound will do for your ears what Monster 3D does for your PC graphics.

Better run for cover, because the Monster Sound 3D & Monster 3D are coming to get you.

For more information call the authorised Australian distributor for your nearest dealer toll free on 1800 248 691 - or visit the Chips and Bits Australia web site at http://www.chips.com.au.



CHIPS&BITS AUSTRALIA PTY LTD

36-38 CLARKE STREET, SOUTH MELBOURNE VIC 3205
MELBOURNE • SYDNEY • ADELAIDE • PERTH • BRISBANE

TELEPHONE 03 9696 1911 FACSIMILE 03 9696 1942
http://www.chips.com.au

Quality Endorsed Company

STARSHIP TROOPERS

Category	3D Shooter
Players	1-TBA
Publisher	Microprose
Available	Mid 1998

Robert Heinlen is one of the old-guard giants of the Sci-fi scene, and deservedly so. One of his novels, Starship Troopers, is at present being made into a big budget Hollywood film, and there's also a game in production going under the same name, where the player will be put into the role of one of the bug exterminators. Wassat? Well, in Heinlen's story, the universe is under seige by some nasty bugs, but they aren't your average cockroach type pests. They're actually quite large and ferocious, hence the need for the exterminators. It's going to be a real-time action shoot-em-up by the looks, though the storyline will apparently be adaptive to the players results on the battlefield.

BATTLEZONE

Category	First person tank shooter
Players	1-TBA
Publisher	Activision
Available	1st Quarter 1998

Those with long memories will remember the classic Atari arcade game where you stuck your face into a perspective tube type thingy and blew the crap out of any green ray-traced thing that moved. Big time fun way

back then, and it seems that the lads at Activision have fond memories of the game too, because they're revamping it into a cutting edge mech tank first person war game that looks very little like the original. The game puts you in a futuristic tank fighting either for the Yanks or the Russkis, battling it out on a number of different worlds, but it's not a straight first person shooter, instead from your cockpit you control the placement of factories, troops, and resource gathering. It's a new way to approach this kind of genre, and hopefully will work well. We'll let you know.

QUEST FOR GLORY V

Category	RPG Adventure
Players	1
Publisher	Sierra
Available	1st Quarter 1998

Quest for Glory 5 - Dragon Fire takes you back to the island of Marete, which has been invaded once again by an army of mercenary soldiers and general 'forces of darkness' kinda people. The sanitised and safe world of Sierra adventure gaming needs a hero, and yup - it's you. Once again there are three character classes to choose from, the warrior, rogue and wizard, will be multiplayable over the internet, and there will be the opportunity for romance, say Sierra. Yahoo! Well, anyway, other than that, the world will be rendered in 3D, and though as per usual there will be a main quest, there will also be plenty of sideline quests as well as the opportunity for open play where you decide what you want to do.

KLINGON HONOUR GUARD

Category	First person shooter
Players	1-TBA
Publisher	Microprose
Available	Late 1998

Since Microprose licensed ST:TNG for computer games, they've been pumping out Trek titles with alarming regularity. Alarming because up until now, they haven't been all that good. KHG might be different though, this looks like it might be plenty of fun, and plenty pretty too. As the title suggests, it deals with the Klingon empire, and the good part is that you get to play as the Klingons themselves, in all their brutal glory. The deal is that you are a young Klingon warrior attempting to cover himself in glory, by running through a series of scenarios, and finally reaching the status of honour guard. All the cool Klingon weapons will be there, including the d'k'tagh dagger and the Klingon disruptor.

BIRTH OF THE FEDERATION

Category	Real time space strategy
Players	1-TBA
Publisher	Microprose
Available	Mid 1998

Yes, another ST: TNG game from Microprose, who are obviously looking to get as much out of their TNG license as they can. ST:TNG BOTF is looking very much like a MOO 2 style game in real time, from within, of course, the Star Trek universe. There'll be 5 ST races to choose from; the Feds, the Klingons, the Romulans, the Ferengi, or the Cardassians, and the Borg will be making an appearance as well. All of the ships and places within the galaxy will be included (but Picard and his crew won't be appearing), and rather than the combat style of MOO 2, Microprose has gone for a more stand offish setup. Instead of giving each vessel orders, at the start of battle you will set the composition of your battle fleet, and issue general orders to them.

EVERQUEST

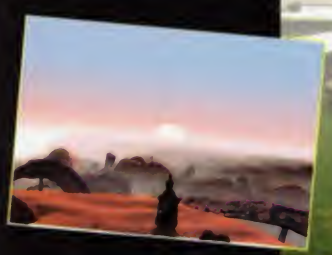
Category	Online RPG
Players	Thousands
Publisher	Sony
Available	Late '98

Real time strategy games have definitely been the big genre of the past couple of years, but it looks like online

RPG's are set to become the next big genre. And while there are quite a few out there or in production, Sony's entry into the field looks very impressive. The system requirements will be high though, with a 3Dfx card required as well as a hefty processor and plenty of RAM. The game itself seems like a cut down version of Ultima Online (and that's not a derisory comment necessarily), with a number of different towns, character classes and types, a reactive economy, a large variety of monsters, and a couple of nifty features to boot.

RISING LANDS

COMING SOON



Hundreds of years have passed since humanity was nearly totally decimated by a cataclysm which destroyed civilisation on Earth. The new society was tribal, **forced to live in Medieval conditions once again. Made up of clans allied for or against one another on hostile ground....**

Actual Screen Shots

"Last month we suspected Rising Lands would kill Warcraft2. Well, this month our suspicions are confirmed. With more appreciable aspects, this game is preparing the murder of its predecessor!"
GENERATION 4, FRANCE, MAY '97

DOWNLOAD THE PLAYABLE DEMO

PC CD-ROM

Distributed Exclusively by

IMPACT Interactive Pty. Ltd.

Phone: (02) 9674 7399
Fax: (02) 9674 7398

MICROÏDS

Download the playable Demo - www.impact.com.au - coming soon

QUAKE II

The Place: My computer gaming room.
The Time: A soon to be not so quiet evening.
The Setting: Quake II, the most anticipated game of '97 is about to be played for the first time. Stereo system has been configured with the simple philosophy of "If the walls aren't shaking we aren't Quaking".
The Cast: The Reviewer. A sad individual who's whole life recently has hung on waiting for a certain game's release. Then there is the mate who appears at any event starring gratuitous violence. For backup is the friend who's job it is to go "Ohhh, Ahhhh" and dribble everywhere when the action starts.
The Result: A night where the most commonly heard phrase was "Wow, look at that!!!".

Not only were my friends and I excited over Quake II's release, everybody is. Being fortunate enough to attend one of Activision's gamer nights celebrating the release of Quake II, I saw a level of excitement that nobody would have imagined back in the days id software released Wolfenstein 3D. Both Tim Willits and Paul Steed of iD were greeted like rock stars and I'm sure a few people in the audience were fighting back the urge to drop to their knees with "We are not worthy, we are not worthy". In between all this excitement and industry hype, gamers everywhere have had fingers crossed that this would not be an empty sequel. After all Doom 2 wasn't exactly a giant leap for gaming over its predecessor. Cast any doubts aside. Quake II is the best first person shooter ever created on the PC.

Man on a mission

One of the biggest complaints of Quake was the general lack of theme. Running around in a bunch of seemingly unconnected levels with no set tasks to complete with the only aim being to kill the blobby monster boss at the end was a bit silly. This time around the iD team have gone back to their grassroots with a definite Doom type environment. No more dreary brown dungeons, this is a futuristic military base setting and you very much feel like you are "somewhere" rather than just on a level. The enemy are the Strogg. A wacky name probably dreamed up when the iD boys visited the Texas beer drinking festival, but the Strogg are anything but comical. They

It's like Quake... except it's prettier, more involved, with bucketloads more pixels and animations, a much better storyline, more levels, and just as much versitilty. Oh yes!

Lots of cool new monsters, lots of innovative ways to dispose of them... well actually, it seems more like Duke or Jedi Knight in single player, but that's fine with us. We'll miss our good buddy big-furry-evil-teddy-bear-gone-wrong-Shamblers though...

seriously threaten the well being of humankind. As part of a counterattack after many assaults on our beloved Earth, you are part of a large marine invasion force headed to the Strogg homeworld. Being that it is a rule of cosmic law that only one tough ass guy can defeat an alien empire, your attack team fall foul on the way down to the enemy planet leaving you to conduct this mission alone. All well and good, but instead of just shunting you though level after level in the usual linear fashion a bit of spice has been added. The levels are divided up into eight units, with each unit being based on a particular theme such as the mines, factory or part of the Strogg city for instance. Playing through each unit involves completing mini objectives from aligning a satellite dish to shutting off a black hole generator and lots of other sci-fi theme based missions. Often you must backtrack through previous levels to achieve these aims. This level backtracking and puzzle solving is no where near the difficulty (or frustration) of Hexen II. The emphasis is purely on combat, with missions on hand to give atmosphere and a purpose in killing alien scum.

If looks could kill, and they do

Those with a quality 3D accelerator card capable of supporting OpenGL (3DFX Voodoo being a prime example) will find Quake II mesmerizing. As was the same in Quake, 16bit colour, high framerates and not a blocky texture in sight is all part of the good life that is OpenGL. The new eye opener OpenGL effect is

Nothing is quite as satisfying as a good double shotty blast, and thankfully this weapon has regained the stopping power it had in Doom. BOOM kerchik BOOM hahaha-ha...

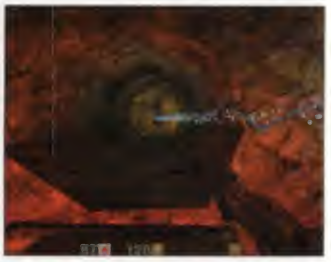
the coloured light sourcing system. Walking into a room, lit only with the blue glow, emanating from phosphorous lighting on the walls, then shooting a green light sourced laser into the darkened recesses. Now this is the definition of eye candy and instant injection of game ambiance without a doubt. If you haven't got an accelerator card then quickly forget what was just described concerning stunning lighting effects. It's bog standard run of the mill lighting only I'm afraid. That's not to say that things look crap without hardware acceleration. You still get transparent water, and all the heavy texture details, it just doesn't hit you in the guts like the OpenGL effects do.

The Quake engine's suspected Achilles Heel has always been big open spaces. Strongly absent were outdoor locations which only popped up now and then and usually resulted in a significant frame rate hit. While it never turns into a trek through the Strogg wilderness, there's no doubt open air spaces and large multi-storied rooms are much better handled in Quake II. Not only does this improve the overall level design through BIG combat areas, but it just adds to the excellent use of light sourcing as you watch rockets and other weapons light up faraway areas. You could kick back and watch it all day if those damned Strogg didn't keep you on the move constantly. While they are an ugly bunch of brutes, their level of detail and animation is another stand out. Shoot them, and they bleed. Shoot them some more and they fall over in death spasms. Shoot them a bit more again and they blow up into wonderful fleshy "Welcome home Ma" Gibs. All the creatures have a personal signature death move, but my fave is seeing the Enforcer's head blown off, resulting in his carcass falling to the ground, arm still spasmically firing its weapon. While the suckers die well, in perfect health they also are very animated. You'll see them load weapons, fall and get back up and some like the Tank have multiple weapon systems that can all be seen activating. How far we've come from the Doom days of single frame sprite animations.

The new enemy

The Strogg are a mix of flesh and technology. This explains why they are ugly, as melting assault weapons into skin is not a pretty look. While you won't see a Strogg on the front cover of Vogue, replacing limbs with weaponry has it's advantages on the battlefield. Take the Tank for example. He has at his disposal a rocket launcher, arm-mounted machine gun and an arm mounted laser blaster. Combined with rock hard armour, you have to use cover and slowly take this guy down. Run straight at him and you'll quickly experience the next stage of a near death experience. Early on though you're main adversaries are the guards (humanoid guys with various light weaponry) but soon the difficulty bar rises as you face Beserkers, Gunners and Gladiators. Gladiators are armed with a rail gun which usually means two shots and you're toast. Beserkers and Gunners, while not armed with this weapon of devastation, are equally dangerous with grenades and machine guns. Then there's the parasitic dog thingie that attaches itself to you with a very long tongue, great as a party trick, but you won't be laughing as it sucks the life out of you. There's eighteen enemies in total and they make life tough for you in the water, land and air.

The characteristic toughness of these creatures really affects the style of play in Quake II. Using corners, ducking (yes ducking is implemented at long last) behind boxes is a necessary part of most of your fire fights. In Quake you could often get away with screaming Valhalla and rushing in, but the Strogg are just too well decked out for such tactics. One disappointment is the enemy AI that seems not to have advanced along with the rest of the Quake engine. The monsters do duck and avoid your incoming fire, but when they keep sitting there while you turkey shoot them... not at all impressive. At least sometimes they make themselves a moving target as they weave towards you,



iD have found the coloured lighting button. Almost everything is lit by spooky artificial light in Quake II, giving the game a feel of all pervading alien technology. Atmosphere plus...

and move towards you they do as tracking you down is high on their priority list. In contrast though, I've seen Gunners grenade themselves to death with poor aiming, creatures get stuck on corners and the worst case a Beserker standing underneath a heavy crate whilst with a push of a button I released it crushing him. This we expect from slapstick clowns, not deadly cybernetic aliens.

Time to kick some

Your arsenal is mostly what you would expect, with notable exceptions being the Rail Gun and the return of everybody's favourite Doom gibber, the BFG. The BFG is slow moving but packs an expected heavy punch with some brilliant lighting effects (yes this is another strong hint, get a 3D accelerator). The Rail Gun shoots a high velocity projectile out, in the form of a puurty blue corkscrew pattern (yes it's a nice lighting effect as well). Very powerful and able to pass through multiple monsters until it hits a wall. Consider multiple monster kills with the Rail Gun a PowerPlay sanctioned activity of violence in the coolest manner. The lower weapons do the job, but no points for originality. Blaster as the default weapon of bodge. Stick to this and you die. The single and double barrel shotguns, well, tradition made their inclusion compulsory. Machine gun and high fire rate chain guns go back to the Wolfenstein 3D days. The Grenade and Rocket Launcher are a must for any assault on an evil alien world. The Rocket Launcher has been heavily toned down from its days of the only weapon of choice. Slower and with less of a blast radius, it is often not the best weapon for all situations. Thumbs up to iD for promoting variety in ordinance use. Grenades are useful and can be thrown close to medium ranges depending on the length of time you hold down the fire key. They are much better than Jedi Knight's wanky limp wristed grenade throws. Finally my favourite. The Hyper Blaster pumps out laser shots like the chain gun spews out rounds, and I recommend this as the weapon of choice because it's fast, has a strong punch and can be shot with a fair amount of accuracy.

It just rules

So we've seen most of the weapons before and the Strogg's AI doesn't stun with its brilliance. Shouldn't these two faults badly affect Quake II and threaten it's position as the new king of the hill in 3D action? No, because the strength of Quake II is its total absolute ability to drag you into a 3D world. Not just because it's using a state of the art fully 3D graphics engine, but because of the way everything comes together with such quality. The graphics and sound bombard you from all directions, the level design keeps you on your toes constantly, as attacks can come from any point. It won't change your life like Doom and it is an evolution rather than a complete revolution, but it's still awesome. Will games like Unreal or Half-Life topple it? We'll wait and see, but at the moment iD holds the trump card.

Pete Sharpe

3D

- Specific OpenGL support for Voodoo & Voodoo Rush.
- Specific OpenGL support for PowerVR2.
- General OpenGL support for other hardware accelerators.
- Check with manufacturer of your 3D card to see if OpenGL is supported.
- iD have stated that patch for Rendition (V1000, V2100/2200) OpenGL is coming.

Plus

www.idsoftware.com

PC PowerPlay GOLD 94%

Category	1st person shooter
Players	1-32 TCP/IP (Internet & LAN)
Publisher	id Software
Price	$99.95
Rating	MA15+
Available	Now
For	Combat is hard-core, backed up by top notch graphics and EXCELLENT sound. A true sense of purpose in a hostile environment.
Against	The Strogg are not as intelligent as we had hoped.
Need	P90, 16Mb RAM, WIN95
Want	P200, 32Mb RAM, 3D card, loud and good quality speakers.

Quake II Deathmatch

by George Argy

'The Good'

I'd like to introduce you to a close, personal friend of mine...

Weapons, man, weapons - that's what killin's about. Quake 2 has ten of them and they're finally (almost) balanced! That's right, rocket-hogs, it's not just a gib-fest anymore. The rocket launcher's rate of fire has been slowed down a little and the stupid 1/2 damage rule has also been done away with. The super shotgun (double barrelled stick-o-fun) is more powerful with an increased spread which makes it lethal at close range, as it should be. The re-introduction of the BFG can only be a good thing and is an ideal tool for clearing out a room full of unruly space marines. Of course, they had to go and remove melee weapons (bring back the chainsaw!), but rumour has it something may be introduced next update.... hmmm.

Hicks? Hudson? Vasquez? Spunkmier?

Quake 2 is internet ready straight out of the box, with support for 32+ players! iD claim up to 200, but I doubt any current Quake server could handle that kind of load - cool concept, though. The deathmatch setup screen is also much more configurable so you can do away with a lot of convoluted command-line parameters. You can now choose between male or female characters that look and act a helluva lot more realistically than in Quake. The ability to drop weapons and items is also going to add an element to Capture the Flag that gets me drooling just thinking about it.

'The Bad'

What the Lords giveth, they taketh away too - no more status bar, boys and girls, meaning no more handy info at a glance. Having male and female characters looks cool, but they should have had different attributes and classes like in Hexen II, or the Team Fortress mod for Quake. Some features that iD promised us also haven't been implemented, like the ability to shoot specific body parts, and weapon discrimination (when you can see what your enemy is carrying).

'The Ugly'

Play Quake 2 for hours on end and you'll realise iD have once again succumbed to the marketing machine and released an unpolished game to meet the Christmas rush. Yes, Quake 2 is unfortunately buggy, and nowhere do you see that more than on the net. There are over 130 bugs reported already, and although most are just annoying (stairs are jerky; grenades everywhere when a server is laggy; multiplayer menu doesn't always refresh servers), some are downright unacceptable (multiplayer games crash when changing levels; elevators do not work properly).

How to make it multiplay

Playing Quake 2 is fun. Setting up Quake 2 for deathmatch is not. Here's how to take the pain out of set-up:

Firstly, Quake 2 only supports TCP/IP networking. That's right, no IPX, direct connect or even modem play, which for most of you means fiddling with your network settings. Go into control panel/network and make sure TCP/IP is installed as the default protocol. Give your machine a host name and IP address such as 100.100.100.1. Give your mates subsequent addresses: 100.100.100.2, 100.100.100.3 etc. That's pretty much it. For internet play, connect to your ISP, then go into Quake 2's multiplayer setup. Mess with your player's name, gender, handedness and then go to join network game. If you have the IP address of a server, add it to the address book and then go 'refresh servers' - this doesn't always work (see 'The Ugly'), so you may have to start a multiplayer game and type 'connect [ip address]' at the console. It should come up with the current level being played, the num-

The Arsenal

Name	Hotkey	Damage (point blank direct hit)	Ammo
Blaster	G	15	None
Shotgun	4	48	1 Shell
Super-shotgun	3	102	2 Shells
Machine Gun	4	8	1 Bullet
Chain Gun	5	8	1 Bullet
Grenade Launcher	6	Up to 118	1 Grenade
Hand Grenades	G	Up to 118	1 Grenade
Rocket Launcher	7	Up to 118	1 Rocket
Hyper Blaster	8	20	1 Cell
Rail Gun	9	100	1 Slug
BFG10,000 :)	0	332, maybe more	50 Cells

(right) The paradigm leap that is the true essence of Quake II: being able to salute your buddies! Many other gestures are built-in too

ber of players, and the maximum amount of players. Jump in and pray for no lag.

Please Sir, can I have some more?

Since its launch on December 9th, Quake 2 has spawned web pages galore. Here's the pick of the crop:
http://www.planetquake.com - probably the most comprehensive and up-to-date Quake 2 site available. Has heaps of links, files, news, patches, server lists etc. and is updated daily!
http://www.quake2.com - another well maintained site with heaps of news, files and links. Also updated daily.
http://www.slipgatecentral.com - this site's been around for ages and contains heaps of goodies for quake and quake2
http://www.bluesnews.com - also been around for ages and has more info than you can poke a railgun at.
http://www.idsoftware.com - umm, do I have to describe what this is? iD's site contains mainly links and screen shots, really. Look to the other sites for cool mods.
ftp://ftp.cdrom.com/pub/idgames2/quake2/ - these guys have hundreds of quake files already, including levels, skins, patches etc.
irc.quake2.com - join the channel #quake2 to get the latest real-time goss.
news: alt.games.quake2 - news isn't as popular as it used to be, but this group has some advice and discussion that you may wish to partake in.

Forget Quake 2, let's play Find that Server...

You've heard the hype, you've played Quake over the net and you're eager to frag some with the sequel. Prepare to be disappointed - for now. Apart from buggy network code, there simply aren't enough good Australian Quake 2 servers on line, although that should change fairly soon. Here's a few I've found so far:
quake2.camtech.net.au
cloud.office.netspace.net.au
q2.gamesonline.net.au
quake2.quicknet.com.au
203.32.216.40

Before you jump on one of these, it's best to try and find the fastest one. The easiest way to do this is type 'ping [server name]' at the Win95 command prompt, and it should return the delay in Milliseconds. The lower the score, the less lag you'll have and the more sanity you'll retain. You might also like to try logging onto an Australian IRC server, such as brisbane.qld.au.undernet.org, joining the #quake2 channel (if there is one) and asking if anyone knows a good Quake 2 server close to your home town. Good luck marines!

Next month... Full Quake 2 playguide, the technology behind the game & more!

	Rate per shot	Spread of fire	Point/lead trajectory	Range	Max Ammo
	Medium	No	Lead	Infinite	Infinite
	Medium	Yes	Point	Infinite	100
	Medium	Yes	Point	Infinite	100
	High	Yes, but why?	Point	Infinite	200
	Very High	Yes, but why?	Point	Infinite	200
	Low	Yes, on impact	Lead	Medium	50
	Very Low	Yes, on impact	Lead	Medium	50
	Low	Yes, on impact	Lead	Infinite	50
	High	No	Lead	Infinite	200
	Low	No	Point	Infinite	50
	Very Low	Yes	Lead	Infinite	200

I-WAR

An impressive new title in the Zero-Gee Flight-Sim genre, I-War mixes intense complexity with fast graphics...

In a far distant future, an Anarchic breakaway Planetary Colonist group called "The Independent Navy" has waged a fifty-year war and wreaked Piracy against Earth's Stiff Collared Spacefleet. These unorthodox punks have gradually seized enough spacecraft to pose a serious threat to the Earth Government, and as our scenario unfolds, are amassing for a major offensive, placing Earth's entire population in jeopardy. You are a young, inexperienced Officer, who has luckily salvaged the wreckage of a ship originally piloted by "Jefferson Clay"; an absolute Legend, who gave his life in an epic conflict, saving his fellow pilots. With this restored piece of history under your command, the Combat Navy Vessel "CNV-Dreadnaught", you set out to take apart the Rebels with honour on your side.

The "Indies", as the Rebels are known, are a rough looking bunch with wild beards, Irish accents and a love of graffiti. Which contrasts to our clean shaven Earth Navy officers with crisp British and American accents. It almost seems to mirror a particular European conflict which has no end in sight, perhaps the developers are suggesting it will continue into space, once we get there?

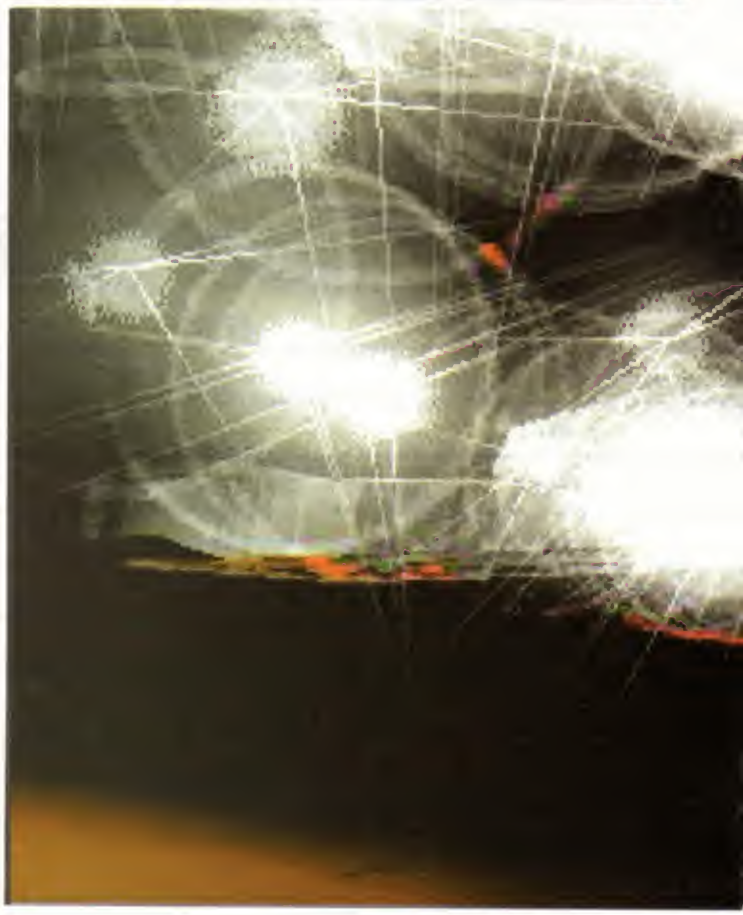
I'm not qualified to comment about the appropriateness of this mirror of ethnic opposition, besides the storyline is extremely realistic and well developed, with stunning video sequences, cool 3D actors and beautiful subtlety.

The ladder style ship trails provide a valuable visual indicator of an opponent ship's attitude & direction

Total pretend-realism

I-War plays as a fairly standard flight sim, in missions of developing difficulty and complexity, with full screen video continuing the story as you advance. The primary distinction that first strikes you is the utterly serious interface and scientific detail to the myriad of instruments and indicators, that are efficiently spread around the cockpit. A great deal of attention has been taken to make them simply functional, for instance, you change the focus of the radar with a single switch, from target Spacecraft, Waypoints or Weapon Loadout status. As well as the very flexible autopilot, which will automatically Approach, Formate, Match Speed and Dock with target aircraft. Of course, all of the data relating to your environments is expressed numerically, so it takes a little adjustment and

A Wingman awaits your suicide order



We kid you not, the I-War intro sequence is a knockout you wil watch many times

tricky thinking to assess things like relative speed and rate of change on the fly. Also, the weaponry systems are fairly straightforward, with an average spread and error, which shifts the focus onto identifying singular targets that aren't grouped, because a coordinated assault against you will almost always spell sudden death, realistically enough!

In this way the game more resembles something like Elite, a hard-core realistic simulation, than a fluffy arcade game. An example is the audio-only communication system, no in-cockpit FMV rubbish here. Also, the usual flying about in circles dogfighting is no longer viable, as you can hit targets at quite long range, and have almost unlimited top speed and acceleration. So you are constantly weighing up the state of your craft, the corresponding strategy you should be adopting and which targets you can safely draw fire from.

Honourably retreating

Keeping a careful eye on your damage and honourably retreating at just the right moment is essential to your survival. Your repair crews can fix just about anything, but superbly, you can focus their efforts onto any particular system to get it finished first. For instance, you can assign all

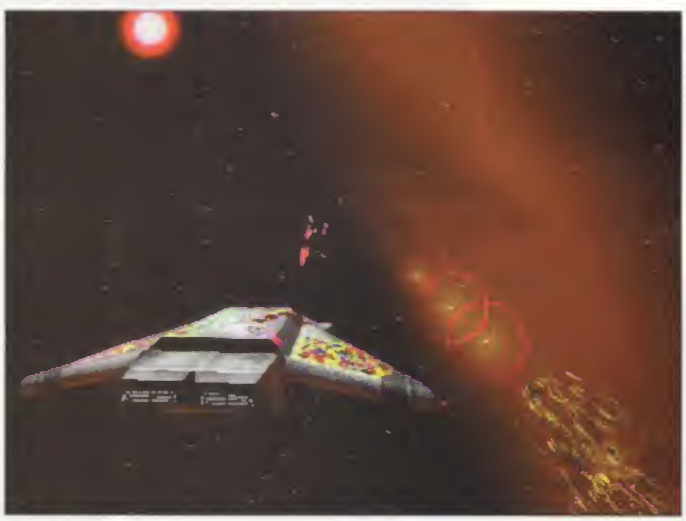
Meanwhile, space goes on around you, freighters go about their business & pirates continue to prey

four crews to fix the guns before they patch the cooling systems so that you can finish off a straggling foe, or stich up the Hyperspace drive and Shields first so that you can rocket your arse out of danger in a hurry. Everything from attitude jets through to power systems are separate, damageable entities. As you direct the repairs, a dynamic schematic of the ship shows each component's location and time required to fix, in incredible detail.

And the detail, perhaps surprisingly, completely carries through into the graphics engine. The spraypainted graffiti adorning the Rebel craft, particle system explosions, gouraud shaded light sources radiating from impacts, detailed nebulae and planets in the background, and of special mention, the speed-blurred stars which stretch directionally to the vector you are travelling. This in particular is an excellent effect, conveying sensation of speed and vertigo, two things you rarely "feel" in a space combat sim.

No arcade shoot-fest

At the same time the realistic thematic of the game transfers into the design of the spacecraft, so they don't look like streamlined F16 fighters, as per reality. They do have little things like flight lights which identify port and starboard sides of the ship, but this might disappoint a few people who like the funky appearance of an X-wing, for instance. It basically comes down to the style of play you prefer. If you want to dive through a cluster of ten fighters and drop a torpedo into the rear jet of the defended cargo ship, seconds before pulling up and survive, prepare to be roasted extremely quickly. Unless, of course you are doing warp 9, at which speed you can barely see anything coming, let along shoot at it! It's a matter of carefully balanced risk taking and wise target selection, playing the numbers to ensure success.



And fast!

Suitably, with the whole serious air of the game, it loads with blistering rapidity, and plays smoothly regardless of your configuration in high res. The programming has been optimised to an amazing level, giving us graphics comparable with Wing Commander 3, for instance, but at a minute fraction of the loading time. At the same time the space debris is purely composed of functional lines which flow past, not little spinning rocks or anything pretty and useless. So it is not exactly breathtaking to look at, but it is definitely breathtaking to play if you're into quick thinking combat strategy kind of stuff. All of the (voluminous) information you need springs right out at you, in almost perfectly absorbable form. A testament to the obviously inspired developers of this crisp production.

Overall, a deep, fast, and hardcore scientific simulation.

Ed Dawson

+ Plus

http://www.oceanltd.com/

89%

Category	Space combat sim
Players	1
Publisher	Ocean
Price	$89.95
Rating	TBA
Available	Now
For	A dream come true for fast minds or mathematical thinkers who appreciate a bit of realism. Absolutely brilliant storyline/video sequences.
Against	Not quite as pretty as we might expect in these 3D accelerated times, but no real detriment to the gameplay. Not for lovers of bitmapped fiery 2D explosions and arcade style Space Dogfighting.
Need	Win 95, P90, 16Mb RAM, 4 X CD, joystick
Want	P166, 32Mb RAM, 4 x CD

RUNS ON PENTIUM™ AND MMX™ PROCESSORS

SPEEDBOAT Attack

The *DEFINITIVE* Racing Challenge!

- Scream around 10 challenging 3D courses, with a choice of 5 incredible power boats
- Arcade, Championship & Time Trial options
- Stunning MMX™ enhanced 3D environments
- 6 player network facility, or 2 player split screen options.

G8+ LOW LEVEL ANIMATED VIOLENCE

Criterion Studios

Available *NOW* on PC CD-ROM

©1997 Telstar Electronic Studios Ltd. All Rights Reserved. ©1997 Telstar Electronic Studios Ltd. All Rights Reserved. Developed by Criterion Studios Ltd.

Exclusively Distributed by ROADSHOW INTERACTIVE

www.interactive.village.com.au

TELSTAR Electronic Studios

SEVEN KINGDOMS

Just because this strategy gem slipped in without the hype of, say, a new Virgin game doesn't mean it isn't worthy. It is. Big time.

I ought to begin by emphasising that Seven Kingdoms is not a clone of anything. It's not a copy of Civ 2. Nor is it just another version of Warcraft 2. Or even an Age Of Empires clone. Certainly, Seven Kingdoms has drawn inspiration from almost every recent empire-building, resource-management, little-blokes-running-around-killing-other-little-blokes type game, but it does so in such a way that remains fresh and different enough to be considered on its own. This is a game that feels thoroughly familiar and yet remarkably strange at the same time.

Little blokes digging holes

You begin with a village comprised, initially, of a few houses and several trees. This is where your peasants reside and, thus, where you go to recruit your little blokes (of course, there are no women) when you want something done. At this point, they can be trained as professionals, specialising in such areas as mining, construction, espionage, science, manufacturing and the military. A miner should perhaps be your first recruit, since getting access to resources is obviously essential and there is usually a prime copper, clay or iron deposit conveniently situated near your home town. Next, a factory is needed to turn these raw materials into products, and a market is necessary for selling them. Provided you build the market close

Cool! All the good bits from all the top strategy games without being derivative

Hot seats

One structure I didn't mention in the review is the Seat of Power. Once you've discovered your particular race's Scroll of Power, you can then go about building the Seat to accompany it. Essentially the Seat is like a temple of worship, since it means you are able to call upon your God to assist you in some way. Here, you can see the Chinese Seat of Power and their god, Jingnung, a fire-breathing dragon who proves very handy in combat. Also shown are the Mayan, Persian and Viking gods.

Looks like Warcraft? Yeah, but Warcraft's enlarged troop characters were a lot easier to indentify than most other RTS units, so similarities are more functional than cosmetic

It's the game our fearless leader should be playing: where multiculturalism means giving everyone a fair go, rather than screwing the guys with no money

Smart little blokes

Of course, the most striking feature of Seven Kingdoms is the peerless unit movement. Tell one of your little blokes to walk somewhere and you'll see a line (on both the main screen and the small map) tracing the precise route (always the best route, too) he will take. This remains on screen until he reaches his destination. If another unit is in your bloke's way, it will step aside just as he approaches, allowing him to continue uninterrupted. Unlike some other games, Age Of Empires for one, you won't ever need to check if someone has got stuck behind a tree or something. And about time, too.

enough to both your village and factory, it will automatically fill up with goods for your peasants to purchase. Similarly, placing any building type near your village will ensure it is immediately well-stocked with any available workers. If the building is too far away, you will have to manually recruit peasants to work there. Depending on the terrain, I could usually manage to link two of each building type to my home town, before I had to either settle a new village or conquer an opponent's.

Smart resource management

So why would you want to build away from your village? Because it's how you make money, expand your empire and win the game, basically. Basing a marketplace next to another village to buy and sell stuff with them, after setting up a trade route (for which you'll need a camel and a trade treaty), is where the real money is made. One of the few "faults" (I don't know if you could call it that) with 7K is that it apparently doesn't matter which resources or goods you actually have yourself. In other games, for instance, you will need a certain amount of wood to build something or be hunting or harvesting regular food to keep your population alive. Here, there is no food to worry about, and you need only money to buy things. All you have to concern yourself with when handling goods and resources is the rather basic economic principle of making sure you are not attempting to sell to someone what they already produce.

Besides a village, the other building you will always begin with is a fort. Safely sheltered inside is your king, overseeing the training of all your soldiers. Sending these troops on a "sortie" into an enemy village is one way to conquer an opponent. Another, and one that will have greater appeal to pacifists, is to build a fort next to an enemy village. By employing a charismatic leader there and/or bribing the locals, the inhabitants may well be persuaded to hoist your flag in the village square instead.

Race plays an important part here, illustrating a new layer of complexity which 7K has added

Attack ships on fire off the coast of Fukui... well, actually it's Fukui that's burning

to the strategy genre. If the majority of people in a village you wish to bring under your control share the same race as your abovementioned charismatic leader and his troops, then they are much more likely to join you. In other words, they'll start to experience a divided loyalty. The level of all people's commitment to their king is registered by loyalty. Reduce this loyalty rating enough (it may take some time) and they'll eventually become citizens of your state.

Revolting peasants

Every single unit under your control has an individual loyalty rating, although all common peasants living in your village are grouped together by race. They are happiest, and thus more loyal, when in work, paying as little tax as possible, residing close to home, and when the different races are getting on with each other. Paying close attention to

the latter is crucial. By giving all the jobs to, say, the Greeks in your village, at the expense of the Vikings, will undoubtedly mean that you'll shortly have to quash a rebellion by bearded blokes in horned helmets. Multiculturalism in this game, as in life, simply means giving everyone a fair go.

Further structures to build include a tower of science, in which research is carried out into various weapons, ships, and the like. In this area, 7K is no where near as complex as Civ 2 or MOO2. Reason being that the game just doesn't span such a huge length of time, and instead remains quite firmly within a kind of generic ancient world. Once you've researched catapults or caravels, then a war factory (for producing weapons) and a harbour (for building boats for trade and transport) are next on the list. An inn will prove incredibly useful, thanks to the supply of expert scientists, constructors, etc who seem to pass through on a regular basis.

No campaign mode??!!

Seven Kingdoms plays like a strategy game that is more thoughtful than most. Diplomatic relationships play a large role in the game - in fact, the options considered here are almost exactly the same as in MOO2. Couple the comprehensive diplomacy with the importance of trade and you finally have a strategy title that succeeds in placing these factors on a par with military strength when it comes to winning the game. This is aided, no doubt, by the numerous and varied victory conditions you can select. The only thing missing is a campaign mode. Instead it offers a Civ-like game generator (which guarantees endless replayability) and two dozen pre-set scenarios to play through.

If you've been hankering after some real-time strategy that puts the emphasis upon strategy, as opposed to tactical combat, then I fully expect Seven Kingdoms to meet those requirements.

David Wildgoose

Interactive Magic can be found at *www.imagicgames.com*, while authors Enlight Software are at www.enlight.com

87%

Category	Strategy
Players	1-7
Publisher	Interactive Magic
Price	$TBA
Rating	TBA
Available	Now
For	Steals most of the good bits from Civ2, Warcraft, Settlers, MOO2, etc and gets away with it. Exceptional music and delightful weather effects.
Against	No campaign. More units would have been good.
Need	Pentium, 16Mb RAM, Win95
Want	Nothing special

Ancient Prophecy.
Sadistic Evil.
One Man's
Destiny.

Black Dahlia

from the
creators
of *Ripper...*

An Occult
Mystery

www.bdahlia.com

DIRECTSOFT AUSTRALIA

DIRECTSOFT AUSTRALIA PTY LTD
PO Box 658 WAHROONGA NSW 2076
Telephone (02) 9482 3455 Facsimile (02) 9482 3650
email: dsoft@magna.com.au

Directsoft Australia Pty Ltd holds the exclusive distribution rights in the territories of Australia and New Zealand to Black Dahlia

F22 Air Domination Fighter

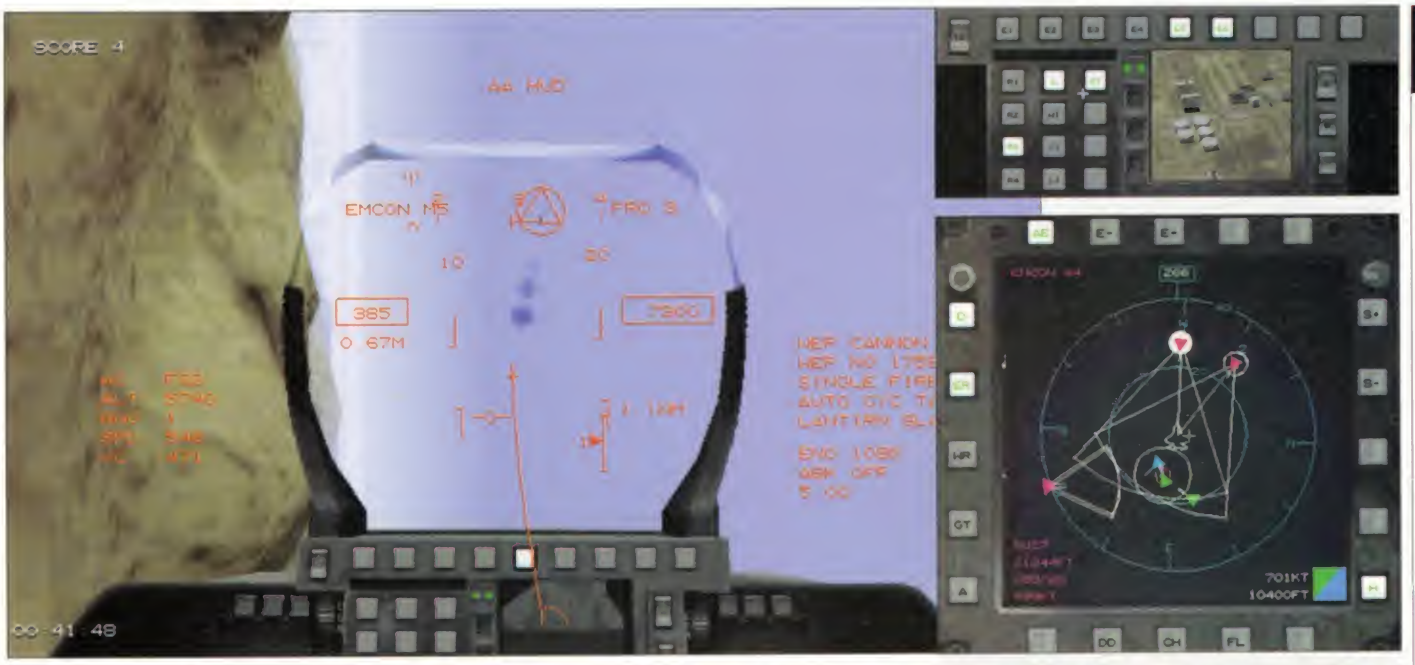
DID's EF2000 had an enormous impact on the combat flight sim scene. The acceptance of this, the sequel, is critical for DID's reputation, which, as it turns out, is looking quite safe.

Command of the air, or air superiority, is a significant factor in generating the combat power that permits land forces to seize and hold ground. F22 ADF puts you in the hot seat of the next generation fighter, on or around the year 2007, and asks you to dominate the air! What is more, it also gives you the opportunity to influence Theatre wide air operations by placing you within an AWACS in Operational Control of all Theatre Air Traffic.

5 Hour Quick Combat!

The Main Menu presents the standard set of selections; the following of which are noteworthy. Quick Combat is a mission lasting up to five hours! Successive waypoints offer up air and ground based targets of up to 60 types. I never got through to the five hour mark - 30 minutes was enough to have my hand slipping off the stick and throttle. This should present any

The AWACS Control Panel. Magic 1, a flight of three F22s is just acknowledging a vector to 150 degrees to deal with a single MIG-31 at 40,000ft.



pilot with lots of challenges, but I did miss the configurable quick missions found in EF2000 and other respectable sims, like the USNF series.

The Simulator offers forty missions in Flight Training, Weapons Training, Air to Air Tactics, Free Flight, Wingmen Training and AWACS Missions. I found the Flight Training missions genuinely informative, not up to Longbow 2 standard (no speech), but they take you through some exotic topics such as electrical and hydraulic failure procedures, and can also be completed at any time of day you choose; and this adds spice to any emergency. Mission briefings are good, but do not follow the standard NATO format used in Longbow 2. There is no ability to alter weapon loadout or waypoints, and the map is low res and does not show threats etc. Not good! Debriefings on the other hand, showed exactly what you did and did not achieve,

(top right) The upfront MFD showing the targets about to be slaved to a weapon (middle right) The Attack MFD showing hostile radar sweep coverage while lining up for a shot at an SU27 at 266 degrees (above) A casual glance down at the MFDs after being given a vector

where you flew, and are quite impressive in terms of detail.

The Tours of Duty selection offers flight in The Red Sea, Eritrea and Saudi Arabia. This 4.5 million square-kilometre area encompasses eight countries and features some of the world's most dramatic geography, including vast deserts, awesome mountain ranges and winding valleys. Each Tour has 10 missions, is linear in operation because you must pass one mission to get to the next, and each increases in difficulty to include air-to-air refuelling and night flights in later missions. This is not a good characteristic, however, I viewed it as a challenge because the game provides an ACMI (Air Combat Manoeuvres Instrumentation) facility, just like you saw in Top Gun the Movie, for the player to record combat manoeuvres and learn from ones mistakes!

The Mission Debrief screen shows a graphic depiction of each element of the mission and an overall rating. Fail!

The war rages around you

So after all the good and the bad, what is the game like? In one word: immersive. For each mission the world is dynamic. Action happens around you in real-time, on the ground, on the sea and in the air. Tanks and supply columns are on the move with trailing dust clouds, aircraft are engaging one another, engaging ground targets, or trying to engage you! If you leave the Situation, Attack and Defence MFDs on max range, you can often get information.

Once in the seat you find a 3D interactive virtual cockpit where

(left & below) Brilliant explosive effects of night time detonations

the mouse or keyboard buttons can be used to perform each function. Close the canopy, fire up both engines, look at the Systems MFD and ensure that the IFDL (Intra Flight Data Link) is on, switch to frequency 1 and request clearance to roll.

Taxi if you wish, or jump to the Apron before requesting clearance to take off. Each action comes complete with written and verbal responses from the 10,000 word "Smart Speech" communication system.

This is often used to guide you to a target while you watch another flight perform SEAD on the Situation MFD, then a brief unmask, designation with laser, thermal or camera, then weapons release. It is also used to guide you to a BVR kill or slide in behind an unsuspecting aircraft before releasing one up his six! Communications is very well modelled, and requires you to change frequencies for secure talk to wingmen and tankers, or use other insecure frequencies for other tasks. This is achieved through a simple interface and controls all wingmen quite well. At the same time the F22's EMCON system automatically adjusts sensors for offensive or defensive action, although you can manually override this to maintain zero Flight EMCON, then go to max EMCON, hand off targets and engage as a Flight.

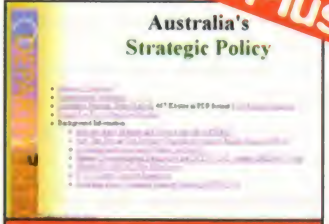
Multiple explosions will rock your aircraft if you take a hit, and these can be ongoing for a couple of minutes before you get a final warning and your aircraft explodes. In the same way you can watch the enemy suffer the same fate. The explosions you see will sometimes result in pieces flying off the airframe and if you are too close to the tail of your victim you can take collateral damage. Get hit by a missile at dusk or at night and you will be blinded by the flash. Launch at night or watch an explosion and the flash is brilliant.

Play the AWACS

The E3 Sentry AWACS aircraft is a fundamental part of Command, Communications, Control and Intelligence (C3I). In many missions the game allows you to either start in this position or jump from your aircraft to the AWACS to control all aircraft within radar view. Then using a simple point and click tool, identify, and prioritise air threats, organise and monitor Combat Air Patrols, and flight Interceptions to achieve your mission. You can then leap back into any aircraft that is not engaged, and influence that air battle before jumping back into the AWACS. This is a great feature for anyone who can monitor 20 or 30 simultaneous events.

I must admit that after playing this game for three days non stop, I am beginning to think that I should be spending the next year studying Air Power at RAAF Staff College, rather than heading South to Fort Queenscliff to study at the Army Command and Staff College! F22 ADF is the most realistic simulation of the F22 Raptor to date, but without a dynamic campaign and the ability to alter waypoints and weapons loadout, is definitely lacking in the planning department and falls short of its otherwise impressive features.

Maj Ian Lindgren.



Much of what is seen in F22 ADF is capability that Australia intends to have early next century (less the F22s of course!) The Minister for Defence just released Australia's Strategic Policy that outlines our National interests, Defence acquisition intentions etc. It's well worth a read at *www.adfa.oz.au/DOD/minister/sr97/min.html*.

Refuelling form a KC 135 Tanker requires much inter-aircraft communication and precise manoeuvring

87%

Category	Flight Sim
Players	1 to lots via internet
Publisher	Ocean/DID
Price	$TBA
Rating	TBA
Available	Now
For	Immersive gameplay at the tactical and strategic level. Leading edge communications, weapons systems simulation and sound effects.
Against	No random mission generator, mission planner or ability to change weapons loadout.
Need	P166 with 32 MB RAM.
Want	P233MMX with 64 MD RAM and 3Dfx card.

3D DIRECT 3D, FOR THOSE WITHOUT 3D HARDWARE ACCELERATION, AND BOTH VOODOO AND VOODOO RUSH CHIPSETS ARE SUPPORTED FOR THOSE WITH 3DFX.

Ubi Soft
ENTERTAINMENT

http://www.ubisoft.com

F1 Racing SIMULATION

Extreme realism

Thanks to cooperation with the Renault F1 Team
Original driver characteristics · Original cockpit configurations of
all the teams · Pit Lane Radio and FOCA TV highlights and information

Extreme racing for extreme fun

More than 30 options for tuning your ultimate Racing car · Set-up tutorial and
3 different skill levels for maximum exhilaration · Head to head battles
with the multiplayer option over a network or splitscreen

Real Time 3D graphics

for the total driving experience · Full 3D Pitstops
Realistic collisions!

AN OFFICIAL PRODUCT OF THE FIA™
FORMULA ONE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP*

©1997, Ubi Soft Entertainment
*Licensed by Formula One Administration Limited

FIA FORMULA 1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

3Dfx

WINDOWS CD-ROM PC

G

Metro GAMES

Tips and tactics: 190 224 0527

LONGBOW 2

Strap yourselves in, helo-jocks. AH-64D Longbow is back, and this time it's called Longbow 2! All hail Andy Hollis...again.

Can you believe it was only last year that Jane's unleashed the most realistic chopper sim to date on an unwitting flight-sim loving public? Since so many moons have passed between then and now, I had to pull the original AH-64D Longbow from the treasure chest to refresh my memory, so I was chuffed to find that Jane's have thoughtfully kept the keyboard mapping identical to the original. The cockpit and systems are also the same as are the flight dynamics, which proves that after all the hours they spent researching, testing with real pilots and fine tuning, the physics model couldn't get much more realistic. Just like before, expect to see variable weather conditions, day/dawn/dusk/night play and realistic chopper damage, as your systems will fail depending on where and how badly you get hit. Longbow 2 also sports a Virtual Cockpit that rocks hard and heavy and is the best one I've seen so far. You can look around the pilot's full field of vision including down at your instruments and still have the IHADSS superimposed on the display - bloody brilliant! With VR this convincing, I don't understand why Jane's didn't add any virtual glasses support - oh, that's right, 'cos they're expensive and useless.

Thrustmaster-friendly

Of course, you can't do a sim this realistic justice without the right tools, and the right tools for the job are Black & Deck... - erm, trusty thrusties; stick, throttle and pedals. Jane's have kindly supplied us with the config files for all flavours of Thrustmaster and CH products, although whoever wrote the thrusty macros obviously wanted you to crash and burn instantly, so you'll have to hit that good ole DOS joystick programming thingy once again. There's also multiplayer support for up to 4 people, but they all have to have the CD. The inclusion of a real CP/G in multiplayer mode is something I'd like to see in all flight sims. That's right, not only can you fly against your mates, but you and a mate can fly in the same chopper - too cool.

The Longbow is surely the finest 3D object seen in a game

Need big PC

My main gripe with Longbow 2 is the extremely unrealistic system requirements. The minimum install is a huge 170MB which still requires CD-ROM access during the game if you want radio chatter, but you cop a pause in the game every time someone says anything, which is extremely distracting. There's a medium install of 290MB, but to get all the whizz-bangs you need the greedy install, which takes up a whopping 420MB! Compare this to Longbow's 36MB, 68MB and 97MB installs. But the fun doesn't stop there; my P200MMX, 64MB RAM + 3Dfx system still couldn't cut the mustard with all the graphics options enabled. I had to chop

Plus

the horizon, terrain and object detail, which meant that the terrain kept morphing as I got closer to it and mountains would suddenly appear before me at close range, making it difficult to fly NOE. Speaking of terrain, I wonder if any AH-64D Longbow players dropped a line to Jane's to mention the fact that the terrain in

All weapon systems, including the Hellfires shown here, are accurately modelled

The look & feel of the first Longbow is carried over

tion the fact that the terrain in the original sucked? As with the original, Longbow 2's terrain may be realistic (it boasts maps that were generated from US Geological survey maps), but what difference does it make when it's all sand with some molehills for cover? In my humble opinion Comanche 3 definitely has the upper hand here, because you can easily judge your altitude without having to look at the dashboard.

Living battlefield

Longbow 2 only offers two theatres this time around (although a mission disk like Flashpoint Korea is probably around the corner); the National Training Centre and Iran. This is enough to keep you occupied if you're into long campaigns, as the type and amount of missions vary depending on your performance, creating a "living battlefield". The two new helicopters, the OH-58D Kiowa Warrior (scout chopper) and the UH-60A/L Black Hawk (utility/transport) also add a bit more spice to campaigns, allowing you to take on a supporting role rather than an offensive one, although they're not as much fun to fly as the AH-64D. Is Jane's, is good.

George Argy

88%

Category	Flight Sim
Players	1-4
Publisher	Jane's
Price	$89.95
Rating	G8+
Available	Now

For The most realistic heli-sim (twice) around. Excellent on-line and hard copy documentation.

Against Boring and unrealistic terrain. Unreasonable system requirements. Novice chopper pilots beware!

Need P133, Win95, 16MB RAM, 2MB Video, 200MB HDD free, 4xCD-ROM

Want PII233, 32MB RAM, 500MB HDD free, 3Dfx

3D 3Dfx Glide

THE CURSE OF MONKEY ISLAND

Alrighty! The late but gratefully received arrival of the Most Anticipated Adventure Game Ever should please just about everyone. Maybe not the Oracle though...

It's about bloody time that Curse Of Monkey Island showed up on the shelves. LucasArts have left one of the most loved adventure game series in the cryo-freeze for quite some time now, and kept us fans of the Lucas Arts Adventure Game (a genre in itself) turning to other adventure games (some good, most bad) for kicks. Well, The Curse Of Monkey Island is finally here, so wipe all those crappy adventure games from your hard drive and settle for the best! After such classics as the previous two Monkey Island games, Day of the Tentacle, and the beloved Sam & Max, CMI simply oozes with the same quality and playability that's made LucasArts the premier adventure game developer out there today. Okay, their more serious adventure games weren't as cool - Full Throttle was okay, The Dig was nothing special, but dammit! LucasArts make the best comic adventure games around!

The monkeys are listening!

It all starts when you first load up CMI. To the setting of a blank screen, the occasional and odd call of monkeys can be heard. The monkeys then start to shriek and yell, all reaching a crescendo with a familiar digital sound also peaking in the background. The letters CMI fade onto the screen, then a few seconds later, in small text at the bottom of the screen "The monkeys are listening!" follows. Only LucasArts could pull this off (I'm talking in the law suit sense here), and it's an absolute classic.

(above) Elaine Marley in the protective (??) embrace of her love and the hero of the story, Guybrush Threepwood (right) Pirate insult sparring

In fact, I've seen this intro at least thirty times now, and it still makes me laugh! It gets you in the CMI mode perfectly. That's not all though, CMI will have you in stitches consistently throughout the adventure. From the Vegetarian Cannibals that worship a lactose intolerant volcano, to a bunch of beautician pirates that give up life of adventure a debauchery on the sea (after a stirring decent song and dance) to return to a life of giving people simply stunning make-overs, CMI is chock full of funny bits that will actually make you laugh, not just smile. CMI is funny, damn funny, and witty to boot. Many gags can be missed the first time around, and the humour can be appreciated by most people. This is aided by the strength of the dialogue, the quality of the puzzle and plot development, and the diversity of the characters. The story in a nutshell is as Guybrush Threepwood, you must save Elaine Marley (your love) from Le Chuck (big nasty evil pirate ghost) and the sweet gold teeth of the pirate infested Caribbean, and get rid of Le Chuck once and for all. Yeah, the story is kind of well worn, but it fits the style of game perfectly. Also, you'll be having so much fun with the game at each step, the ultimate goal becomes secondary.

Everything's funny!

I thought long and hard about the appeal of Lucas Arts adventure games, and one thing

It's a LucasArts adventure, so of course it looks beautiful, makes you laugh, plays well and constantly challenges. And it will undoubtedly keep the Oracle busy for months to come

becomes obvious. There's not just one thing that stands out about their adventure titles. LA put an effort into every aspect of the game, and it shows. CMI continues this trend. The graphics are breathtaking, with painstaking attention to detail. The music and sounds give the game perfect personality. The voice acting has also been carefully attended to, and works exceptionally well. To help give the feel of watching a cartoon or movie, all menus have been done away with, and when you left click and hold on an interactive object, you get a mini-menu with a couple of action choices. Rather than plodding around the screen, there are now quick links to various areas indicated by an arrow - double left click and you instantly go to where you want to. The thing that stands out though, is the delivery. Repeated reference to the inane content of its point and clickers is made, and all in good timing and taste. CMI parodies the rest of the adventure gaming genre too. Nothing is sacred. On the options screen, there's a 3D accelerator check window. Click on it once and you get a "we were just kidding" message. Click on it again, and the developers inform you that they were really kidding. After repeated attempts at enabling a non-functional feature, the developers take a stab at your intelligence. As far as intelligence goes, there are two game modes - standard and mega monkey mode. MMM contains more puzzles and a bit more story and dialogue, and is thus a bit more difficult. Standard is still a worthy challenge though.

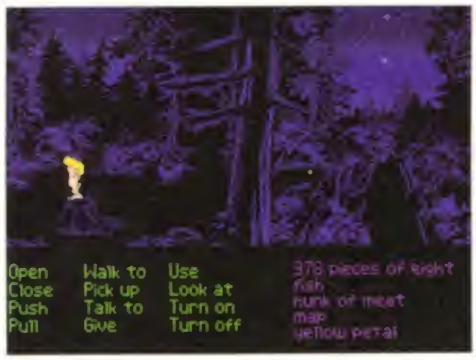
A rather nifty little feature is the ability to turn off the tags on screen. Rather than getting a little text description of objects that you are able to manipulate, you get absolutely nothing. The graphics are crucial in making this mode work too - useable objects don't stick out from the background like neon signs. For a real challenge, try playing with tags off.

Stan the Salesman

Many fond memories are associated with the Monkey Island 1 and 2, and LucasArts have obliged the sentimental streak in us all. There are constant and numerous references to the previous two games - some obvious, some not so obvious. Remember the sparring of insults in the first MI? It's back in CMI, though the rules have been changed. Pirates consider themselves to be of a higher class than the more common rogues, so this time, the comebacks must not only suit the insult, but also rhyme. The insults are actually hilarious too! Stan the Salesman appears again (this time trying his hand at selling life insurance), as does an obligatory warp back into Monkey Island 1 mode. For the real fans, there's plenty more obscure references and cameos to help keep you entertained.

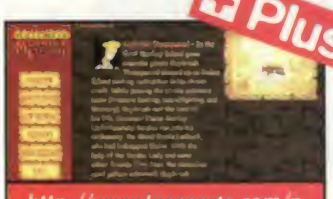
That's the ultimate strength of CMI, the icing on the cake. You're kept entertained throughout. Rarely is there a dull moment, and you're always as least partly aware of what you need to do. If you're stuck, there's this reassuring sense that the solution is not that far away. In true Monkey Island tradition, you can't die (well you do in CMI, but you come back after a cheap stab at the MI policy of invincibility), so adventuring has a much more pleasant pace to it. Finally, once you've finished CMI, you'll be tempted to play it over again with the other difficulty setting, maybe more than once. With how many other adventure games do you get the urge to play through again? Not many in my case. The Curse of Monkey Island is already a classic. Get it!

March Stepnik



Menus are contextual and will remain hidden until needed. Although it is another point-and-click adventure, CMI is aware of the genre's shortcomings and tries to make gameplay fun, rather than just...well...point-and-click

Plus



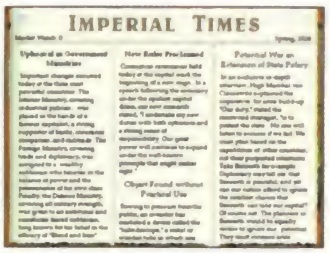
http://www.lucasarts.com/products/monkey/index.html
Look for updates to the game here. Will have links to fan sites in the near future.

PC PowerPlay **GOLD 92%**

Category	Adventure
Players	1
Publisher	LucasArts
Price	$TBA
Rating	G8+
Available	Now
For	An enjoyable adventure game! LucasArts have pulled it off again.
Against	Not much, really! It all comes down to taste. Those that aren't amused should be hung by their testicles over a crowd of women at a Chipmunks show!
Need	Win 95, P90, 16 MB RAM, Direct X 5.0 (included), Quad CD-ROM.
Want	Big chunky monitor and a loud speaker kit.

IMPERIALISM

It was an age on emerging industrialisation, of social revolution and of brutal, bloody hand to hand combat. Burn your history books, kids, and play the game instead!



Imperialism is another fine hard core strategy simulation from the masters at SSI, where a blend of economics, diplomacy, and full on aggression are required for your bid to take over the entire world. And it's not a bad game either, plenty of fun to play (if maybe a just little staid). The time period for Imperialism spans the industrial age, from roughly when industrial development and economic policies really came to the forefront of world politics, when the nature of war was transformed due to mechanical advances, and when diplomacy became little more than a way to foster economic growth. It may, however, be a little dry for some tastes - the emphasis is upon thought rather than action, but if you don't mind a little cerebral action when you play a game then this might be worth a look.

Economic domination

Imperialism is a very different game to the turn based strategy benchmark of Civilisation, but they are still from the same genre and though the settings and (occasionally) goals are different the basic tenets still apply - that of building up your empire at the expense of others, whether that be through economic domination or military action. But Imperialism focuses upon the internal production and maintenance of your empire just as much as the

"Sir! Private Johnson reporting for suicidal rush at enemy cannon emplacement, Sir! And looking forward to it, Sir!"

(above) the micro-management screen, where you decide what to build, what to buy, and whether you can afford it

expansionary tactics you choose to employ. And there is a real choice too - it is quite possible to stay away from military action for the entire game and concentrate upon making friends with lesser nations and annexing them to increase your economic powers, rather than just blowing them up.

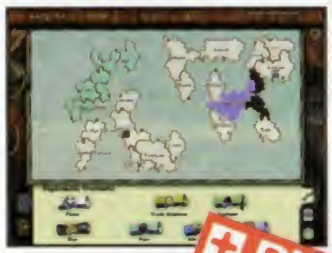
World Despot Supremo

In most cases though, you will need to employ a range of strategies to become World Despot Supremo, creating economic ties where it benefits you, diplomatically brokering agreements where necessary and waging war when you feel it will do the most good. All three are complex enough to keep you interested, in fact the depth of strategy required may be off putting even to the experienced strategy nerd, but there are a variety of separate tutorial missions covering civilian units, military units, naval forces, transportation, industry, trade, and diplomacy to train you up in the essentials - and though each separate tutorial is far too rudimentary they do school you in the basics, just enough to get you started. Once you do get into the game proper though, you will have to deal with a dizzying array of decisions including where and what to build within your country, which materials to produce and sell, who to trade with, whether to build up for war, whom to rely on for allies, and so on. Then there are the battle sequences once battle eventuates, which can be automatically adjudged by the computer (like the battles in Civ), or you can step in and control each troop yourself, though this would have been done in a little more depth.

Historical bent

There are only three scenarios to play (apart from the tutorials), each has around 5 countries to choose from (depending upon the scenario, different countries will have easy, normal, hard, or nigh-impossible goals), so there's plenty of lastability there, as well as a random world generator for those without a historical bent - and multiplayer games to top it all off. In all the different types of games you won't have to go all the way and take over every country in the world, instead a 'world council' will vote during a pre-nominated year on who is the biggest and the best, and if you win the vote, you win the game. There's a lot to do, a lot to learn, and it requires a great deal of time and effort, but Imperialism is a well thought out, detailed, and very playable game that strategy players should enjoy immensely, but one that novices strategy nerds may find a little too demanding.

Gareth Jones



81%

Category	Turn based strategy
Players	1-8
Publisher	SSI
Price	STBA
Rating	TBA
Available	Now

For Hugely detailed, and fairly historically accurate simulation of one of the most important periods in our recent history. Plenty of depth and lastability, and useful help screens.

Against Might be too a bit too much for non-strategy nerds, the graphics are passable but not pretty, and the screen scrolls way too fast, and the individual battle sequences are perhaps a little too simplified.

Need P75, 16MB RAM, Win '95, 2 x CD

Want P133, 32MB RAM, 4 x CD

PAX IMPERIA - EMINENT DOMAIN

Promising much and just a little bit late comes Pax Imperia - Eminent Domain. Sci-fi resource management strategy gamers are a tough bunch to please though...

Yes, it's much anticipated, and yes, it looks great... but it's not as good as it could be, sadly

This is one that has been in the works for a long time. The original Pax Imperia was a hit on the Macintosh back in 1993, and this sequel has been in development since almost then. It hasn't been an easy road for PI-ED though, the original publishers Blizzard dumped the game late in the development stage in favour of Starcraft because they thought it had a more saleable name. From here PI-ED could have just withered away, forgotten about and put into the too hard basket, but then THQ and Heliotrope stepped in and continued finalising the game. Apparently they reduced the scope somewhat, and attempted to make it simpler and more playable while still retaining the depth of strategy required for a game such as this. And they almost succeeded too...

Real Time MOO2

At first glance, Pax Imperia - Eminent Domain looks and feels very much like MOO 2 in real time. In fact, save for the real time/turn based nature of the games, the similarities are quite startling. PI-ED's interface is very, very much like MOO2, and the basic tenets of the game are almost exactly alike. You start off as a fledgling race in a galaxy (configurable from 20 star systems upwards) filled with up to 15 other fledgling races, each with different strengths and weaknesses, and the race is on to discover just who will prevail and become pre-eminent force in that area of space. Then there's the starting steps to the game (and here's where the first difference between PI-ED and MOO2 becomes apparent - Pax Imperia's multiplayer interface is pretty, functional, and most importantly it works properly). But even so, right from the start the similarities are apparent - you start off by choosing a race, and of course there are stock races to choose from, though you can design your own race, and the choices are very reminiscent of MOO2's custom race creation screen (though there are no pretty Elerian style graphics). However, this is all by the by. If Pax Imperia distinguished itself in terms of gameplay, these comparisons and others would fall by the wayside. Unfortunately, for my money, it doesn't quite work. It's a good game, especially with the multiplayer capabilities, but still I don't feel that there was enough quality in the gameplay to immerse me in the world and keep me coming back for more.

Why not? Well, for starters, it's a little too easy to automate the building process. Whenever a planet is colonised, the colony automatically begins to build planetary installations (such as robotic mining, hydroponic gardens, and

In every area MOO2 outshines Pax2, except that of multiplayer. Why? Because it works well...

so on), and you are given a selection of 5 or so options for the order in which the available installations are built. The default option is to build the smallest (in terms of construction time) installations first, and then progress to the longer ones, and this seemed to work fine for me - it was very rare that I felt the need to actually muck about with the build queue. Once the colony is established on planet, you can then build a spacedock and some defensive installations (well, actually, you can do this at any time, but it makes sense to wait until the planet has built itself up a little).

Live and let spy

One element that has worked quite well, possibly better than MOO2, is in the area of espionage. You don't build spies, instead you allocate points to the espionage budget - the more available the more likely your acts of sabotage are to work. And while you don't quite have the same powers available to you as with MOO2 (like the pre-patch ability to destroy an entire Battlestation), it can be a very handy ability to have.

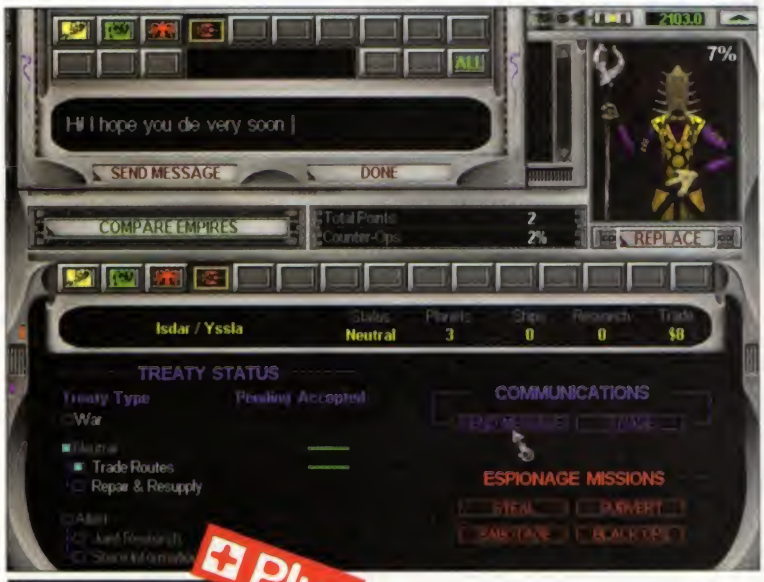
Also, the ship design section is well done, which is a good thing considering how important the design of ships is to the game.

to set the battle sequences to auto and let the computer handle all the decisions, but this isn't nearly as much fun as handling the whole thing yourself, although once you get a decent fleet together it is fairly hard to keep things in order.

Could've been a champion

All up, Pax Imperia - Eminent Domain is a good game, but certainly not a great one. The intuitive interface, the large and detailed research tree, the cool cut scenes when something of import happens, espionage, ship design, and combat - but still it just didn't quite impress me enough to want to keep playing in the long term (though a network game with 10 or so human players might change my mind on this). I really wanted to like it...maybe it's the pacing of the game (though this can be changed in-game), maybe it's the similarity to MOO2 that put me off, maybe it's just the whole real-time thing, but I just can't bring myself to say that this is all that good.

Gareth Jones



www.pax2.com is the official site, and there's links to fan sites for the original Pax Imperia as well as Eminent Domain listed there too.

There's nothing particularly new or revelational about the ship design screen, all the usual elements are there (ship size, a variety of weapons and placement options, shields, hull space, and so on), but it's presented well and is nice and easy to use. Why are ship designs so important? Well, for combat of course! And combat is another area that works well, too. The option is available

65%

Category	Real time space strategy
Players	1-16(TCP/IP, IPX, Modem, Serial)
Publisher	GTI
Price	$TBA
Rating	G8+
Available	Now
For	Nice interface, cool ships, espionage, cool intro and cut scenes, and generally a lot like MOO2 in real time.
Against	It's just not all that good, goddamit! It sounds good, and there are a lot of areas that have been done well, but they just don't quite come together to make a very good game. Sad really.
Need	486/DX4 100, Win '95, 16MB RAM, 2 x CD
Want	P133, 32MB RAM, 8 x CD

SPEED RALLY

This Rally racer brings new flavours to the spicy world of dirt racing. Buckle up, chums...

You're racing. You're doing 180mph. You're travelling over loose, dry, mud. You hit a corner.

You steer to the outside, flick the wheels towards the inside while buffing the handbrake for a split second. The car slides gracefully sideways, and you reorient the wheels toward the new vector direction you are sliding in, back along the road. You whoosh through the corner sideways, flicking up leaves and sticks, making minute steering adjustments to direct your slide. Then you're through, already facing in the right direction. You straighten up and hit the gas. Your arc movement gradually ends and the car leaps forward at a cool, nasty speed. Flawless.

Slip 'n' slide

Such is the simulation of crazy dirt-chewing musclecars depicted in Speed Rally. Gone are the arcade-ey exaggerations, the unrealistic handling, all that remains is Pure Sim. So much so, in fact you will be amazed at the amount of controlled sliding that's required to simply stay on the course. On TV you can see that Rally Driving has a large increase in the slide factor, but you could be forgiven for guessing that it's the exception, not the norm. Not so.

Speed Rally is really a total switch from those soft road-racers where you ABS brake to avoid any kind of skid action across those extremely forgiving grippy bitumen tracks. You have to you gun it, oversteer and chew up the sideline dirt at speeds near to max.

That said, the gameplay in Speed Rally is pretty damn good. It has a very nice feeling, is very responsive and has a fairly quick learning curve. Also the visuals offer good feedback on your situa-

Rally driving as it was supposed to be. None of this kiddy arcade-style sliding - this is the real deal

tion; the roll of the suspension, the lay of the road are all rendered with a respectable amount of realism, and good sensation of speed, which is what we like to see!

Bend a fender

And realism would seem to be the keyword, refreshingly enough, when describing Speed Rally's landscapes. From towering Canadian forests to rolling Chinese foothills, they are very 3D and lush looking, rendered at the far distance. They also have environmental sound, like driving under enormous rippling flags in the Chinese course, and the transition from dirt to paved road, and the subtle variations when driving across leaf litter and rough rocky surfaces. In the same vein of realism, "Damage" texture maps are applied to the car models when they stack into something, which makes them look pretty battered by the end of the race!

Naturally you can choose from a range of vehicles with different attributes, and you can fine-tune their performance in Championship mode with custom adjustments for those professionals amongst us.

3D SPEED RALLY HAS A RANGE OF GRAPHICS MODES TO PLAY IN, 320X200 AND 640X480 BOTH HAVING SUPPORT FOR 256 AND HIGH COLOUR MODES. AND OF COURSE THE OBLIGATORY 3D ACCELERATOR CARDS ARE BLANKET SUPPORTED WITH DIRECT3D, ACROSS THE BOARD SUPPORT THERE. NEEDLESS TO SAY, WITH A 3D GRAPHICS CARD THE GAME IS WAY SMOOTHER, WAY MORE DETAIL, WAY BETTER.

Apart from the lack of enough tracks, this is the rally sim to have

Smart AI

Your opponents have three levels of intelligence, the Rookies are beatable after only a short amount of effort, but the Normal and Veteran levels will absolutely kick your arse until you totally nail down the controls and master the slide technique. They are also very aggressive and give you real inspiration to overtake, or at least pile them into a wall. Which you can watch again and again in the brilliant replay mode, which has excellent camera positions and dynamic random followcams which do a great job of displaying the race in a lucid manner.

You can choose to play versus the computer, Time trial, versus over a Network or direct link, and 2 player Split-Screen mode. This last one is the simplest, and is very well done, with almost no noticeable slowdown. And you get to abuse the opposition in person when they whup you senseless.

Ed Dawson

89%

Category	Offroad Racing Sim
Players	1-2 split screen, 1-8 networked
Publisher	Virgin Interactive
Price	$TBA
Rating	G
Available	Now
For	A hot Rally Racing Sim, with excellent gameplay, good graphics and a great techno soundtrack.
Against	Very few flaws, however we could want more than six tracks and perhaps more snazzy tricks with 3D graphics in these days of full-on special effects. But otherwise, great game.
Need	DOS/Win 95, P100, 16 Mb RAM (32 for DOS under Win 95), 4 X CD
Want	P133, Direct 3D accelerator

STEEL PANTHERS III

The original was the talk of the strategy town a couple of years ago, now the refined and revamped version does the name justice.

Tactical turn based wargames have typically in the past centered on one specific event or time period. Be it WW2, or the Battle of Gettysburg it was thought that to cater for the wargamers lust for detail all the eggs should be kept in one basket, so to speak. Not so with the Steel Panthers series. Steel Panthers II allowed battle scenarios ranging from 1950 to 1999 with multiple theatres of war such as Europe, the Korean Peninsula or the Middle East. All this without sacrificing detail on the field of battle, not bad. While the emphasis was heavily on tank to tank land skirmishes, other units such as air support and artillery were included. Steel Panthers III extends the time line from 1939 to 1999 and allows a whole host of multi-national forces for you to toy with. Rather than controlling single combat units as with its forebears, SPIII gives you control of platoon sized units on an increased 200 yards per hex scale.

Learn the hardware

Veterans of the Panthers series won't have too much trouble coping with the new scale of battle. It's still about organizing your forces into strong lines and conquering command flags to earn victory points. After a set amount of turns each sides calculates a result based on enemy units destroyed, friendly units lost and flag conquests. The interface remains pretty much the same as before, except with more pop up information boxes appearing over the battlefield relating battle and terrain information. As each unit now consists of more than one tank, frontlines tend to be harder to punch through, so a bit more thought (especially on perfecting that flanking strategy) is necessary to push the battle ahead. Having basically unrestricted access to WW2 and post WW2 military hardware is the big sweetener here. Just a glance at the included encyclopedia shows the detail that SPIII goes to. Every nation from super power states down to the Mujahadeen Afghans are represented. Forty scenarios are on offer, or for those with lots (and I mean lots) of time on their hands one of the six campaigns will keep the brain ticking. SPIII contains an excellent editor as well as a random mission generator. The editor as expected allows you to customize the landscape of your battle, plus how many and what units each side will take into the conflict. This is where the newbie to the Steel Panthers series really has to sit down and scour through the hardware encyclopedia. Learning that tanks don't just come in two sizes, big and little ones but numerous flavours is imperative to even moderate success. Beginners also have to face a tutorial which is completely manual based with no on screen hints and tips. It's a challenge.

Hectic helicopters

The only fault that exhibits a real annoyance is the insistence of retreating helicopter gunships to always pull back over enemy territory, thus gaining extra damage. Possibly a bug or maybe my pilots were a bunch of yellow bellies that just cracked under the strain and deserve a good whipping. SPIII is a good choice for the Steel Panthers veteran who wants more of the previous series, but on a larger scale. For the uninitiated SPIII is an engrossing and detailed examination of land warfare tactics throughout this century, but it's very dry and takes some effort in getting into the groove.

Pete Sharpe

The ultimate in anal-retentive turn based strategic hex warfare, save for some suicidal helicopter pilots

84%

Category	Turn based warfare
Players	1-2 play by email
Publisher	SSI
Price	STBA
Rating	TBA
Available	Now

For Whether it's artillery strikes, airborne assaults or tank engagements, the sheer detail on offer is a tactician's paradise.

Against Those crazy choppers. A better tutorial with less of a learning curve needed for beginners.

Need 486/66, 16Mb RAM, DOS 6.22.

Want Nothing Special

Plus

JACK NICKLAUS 5

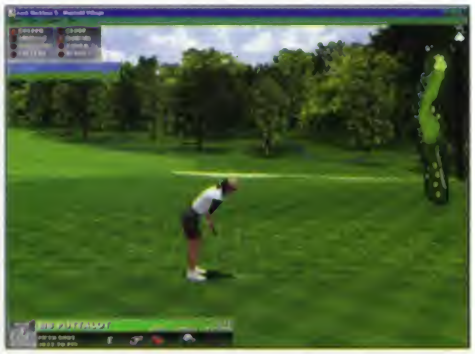
Remember the ancient Accolade Mean 18? We all do... It was one of the first multiplayer games PCPP staffers really got into. Well, right now is that past's distant future, and Accolade are still at it.

On my hard drive many games come and go, some because they're plain crap, but others because they just have an in built life expectancy. Then there's the special breed that reserve themselves a permanent spot. Quake because it's Quake, Total Annihilation because one day I will beat Ashton Mills, and finally Links LS98, because online golf has me in its evil clutches. Sure, it doesn't have the cool reputation of other online pastimes ("hey, I'm a hard core Quake player that can frag 5 opponents in under 10 seconds, what can you do? Well... err... I can score a one under par at the Oakland Hills Country Club hole 6!"). So, can Jack Nicklaus 5 push Links off to the recycle bin? Not quite, but it comes close on a few counts.

Rippling water!

As is the pre-requisite of all recent golf games, JN5 exhibits excellent graphics. Water courses, trees, fairways and the like are all represented in quality fashion minus the anal perfection of the Links graphic system in the form of rippling water, etc. The biggest diversion from tradition is the use of a textured polygon golfer replacing the expected digitialized on screen swinger. The only difference it makes to gameplay is allowing a more realistic viewpoint from any one of the multiple camera views, because the golfer exists in 3D rather than as a flat pasted on image.

For quite a while now the animated swing gauge has been the tried and true method of controlling the golfer's swing. Always cooking in the background of game developer land has been the aim of implementing a more natural method of control more akin to swinging a club. JN5 uses what is best described as a quirky system of sliding the mouse from right to left in a sweeping motion "sorta" like a golf swing. After a lot of practice using this brave new world of mouse swinging, I just couldn't get the hang of it, with shot after shot landing 3ft away at best. This isn't the disaster it could have been, as the time honoured 2 click or 3 click gauges are just an option screen away. What does make for unwarranted aggravation is with full graphics settings on, pushing the aim your shot arrow around the screen is sluggish even on a P166 32Mg RAM. Not horrible, but a strange nuisance.



What?! A golf game without the oh-so-necessary snazzy golf attire? Apart from this glaring omission it's still pretty good though

Plenty of green

With all the golfing basics accounted for and performing well JN5 serves up its winning shot. Included are not the usual 3 or 4 courses, but 10 courses guaranteeing value for your gaming dollar. On top of this you can download courses from the Internet made by other golfing loonies such as yourself. These downloadable courses are courtesy of the editor that is also part of the JN5 package. Packed with features you can build a course from scratch inserting trees and bunkers wherever you wish then adjusting height and a multitude of other course variations including your own graphic and sound files. Just short of Links in graphics and advanced shot setup (eg foot placement) JN5 becomes a viable golfing alternative because of its equally strong playability and Santa Claus approach to courses.

Pete Sharpe

89%

Category	Golf
Players	1-4 TCP-IP, LAN, Mod
Publisher	Accolade
Price	$79.95
Rating	G
Available	Now
For	Solid ball physics. Strong challenge through punishing hooks and slices for wild overswinging. Putting is realistically difficult as well.
Against	The box advertises the Accolade online player matching service. Not up and running at time of writing.
Need	P120, 16Mb RAM, WIN95.
Want	P166, 32Mb RAM.

ANDRETTI RACING

Care to eat my dust, Mario? Is that you in my rear-vision mirror, Jeff? How does being second for a change feel, Michael? Andretti Racing finally gives you a chance to answer these burning questions.

If I could get away with writing this review in two words, they would be "damn" and "fast". To be honest, I picked up the Andretti Racing box and approached the blurb with contempt. Sure, EA have made some decent sports sims in their time and they've even swayed us Aussies into favour by releasing an AFL sim (carn the Crows), but when their marketing people whack labels like "the most accurate Indy car and Stock car physics available in a PC racing game" and other such shite on the box, you can't help but be a little cynical. But the cynic in me had to take a back seat as I played the game. Read on, gentle reader and find out why.

2 for the price of 1

Firstly, there's the value for money factor, as you get two racing sims thrown at you for the price of one. Choose between racing grunty stock cars or anal F1 machines on any of the 16 circuits, which are all based on real tracks. Although the EA marketing folk claim Andretti Racing has the toppest driving engine so far this millennium, in truth the driving engine is very simplistic and forgiving, allowing you to make some pretty extreme turns and recover easily. Even so, you get a good sense of the two cars performing very differently. The F1 behaves as you would expect: awesome acceleration, sensitive steering with the delicacy of a Sunday morning hangover, but not to the extent of MS CART which sees you eating wall if you oversteer by a fraction. The stock car is a little more workable for mine, and is probably the car of choice as there are enough F1 sims out there but not enough quality Daytona rip-offs.

Smooth as a baby's ass

Sure you don't get real-world physics, but the trade off is well worth it: silky smooth frame rates (with 3Dfx, naturally), highly detailed cars, beautiful backgrounds and distant horizons. There's other funky stuff, too: the usual debris, sparks, lens flare, as well as smoke and burnin' rubber to appease those who drive a Toyota Crown in real life. AR also features five different camera views for your petroleum-burning pleasure, although I'm still trying to figure out what's so 'virtual' about the cockpit view.

Jeff Andretti claims the AI of the auto-controlled cars is 'exceptional' (read: 'predictable'). It's non-configurable, so once you beat a track a few times you'll need some fleshy opposition if you ever want it to be interesting again.

Given the past few PC racing titles, it looked like all that was going to be produced in this arena (pardon the pun) was hard-core sims trying to out-do F1GP2, or games that tried to wrest punters doubloons away from Timezone and back into the small screen. With a little help from the 3D card boom, Andretti Racing has tried to redress the balance by reaching a good compromise between intense realism and ease of play. Although it's not a game I could see myself playing for more than a couple of weeks, the ease and fun of multiplayer will add replay points until I can convince Sega that my lounge room would be a perfect showcase for a few Daytona machines.

George Argy

Plus

77%

Category	Racing sim
Players	1-8
Publisher	EA
Price	$79.95
Rating	G
Available	Now

For Amazingly fast graphics that really give you a sense of speed. Multiplayer is tops!

Against Simplistic driving engine may deter the racing elite. Way over-hyped compared to what it actually delivers.

Need P133, Win95, 16MB RAM, 2MB Video, 2xCD-ROM

Want P200, 32MB RAM, Direct 3D supported card, 8xCD-ROM, Steering Wheel

3D 3DFX, RIVA 128, DIRECT3D

PANZER GENERAL II

When you're on to a good thing, stick to it. Looks like another decent offering from those who know strategy best, SSI.

It seems strategy is all the rage at the moment, but SSI are keen to do some roots-gaming and show us where all this RTS nonsense was born. That's right kiddies, Panzer General II is a turn-based, hexagonal movement WWII simulation that reeks of a large-scale chess game. The differences between it and its predecessor are immediately obvious: sprites that rotate, well drawn maps and realistic sound effects. What is also immediately apparent is how much better it could have been in this department. No matter what the back of the box says the maps are 2D, viewed from a front-on, 45 degree bird's eye view to give it a 3D feel and there is no Line of Sight/Line of Fire no matter what the terrain - if a unit is next to you, you can shoot it. The units are also 2D bitmaps and the explosions are all identical. All a bit of a pity really when you compare it to what's out there nowadays, but the bonus is it'll run plenty good on a lower-specced machine.

Real, hard-core strategy. You gotta love those hex grids and pretty European patchwork crop fields waiting to be flattened by advancing death machines

D.I.Y War

SSI has tried to build a 'living battlefield' by varying the difficulty and resources of successive battles in a campaign depending on your previous performance. Although the missions are 'canned' in the sense that each campaign has set scenarios that you play, your core units (the guys that stick it out with you for some unknown reason for the duration of the war) increase in strength and experience as time marches on. As well as making the single player experience worthwhile, SSI has also put a lot of effort into the multiplayer side of the game. You can slug it out with 3 others over a LAN taking a country each and battling for supremacy in one of 12 multiplayer specific scenarios, or you can jump on the net and do some damage on Club SSI, a free online gaming service, or (and this the cool part) you can play someone via email - something that only a turn-based game could achieve. If'n you ever get bored of all of these options, a scenario builder lets you do some do-it-yourself wargaming.

Nice touches

There is nothing inherently wrong with Panzer General II because SSI know their market and aim to please it, and that they do very well. The only problem is that that market is becoming more and more of a niche as gamers demand intense realism, superb graphics and sound and, for the most part, real-time action. Adding some new game features and slightly better sound, music and graphics does not put this sequel on par with the likes of Close Combat 2. 10 points to SSI for making an effort with the most oft-neglected part of the game though - the music. The CD music fits the game perfectly, with snippets of Ride of the Valkyries making a Panzer attack on some unsuspecting French village sound like something straight out of Kelly's Heroes (ah that sweet, sweet Nazi gold).

Refreshing it is, to see the old school design standing fast in the face of toy-strategy.

George Argy

82%

Category	Strategy
Players	1-4
Publisher	SSI
Price	$79.95
Rating	G8+
Available	Now

For A well thought-out, immensely playable game. Good hard-copy documentation with extensive equipment tables. Music that you actually want to listen to.

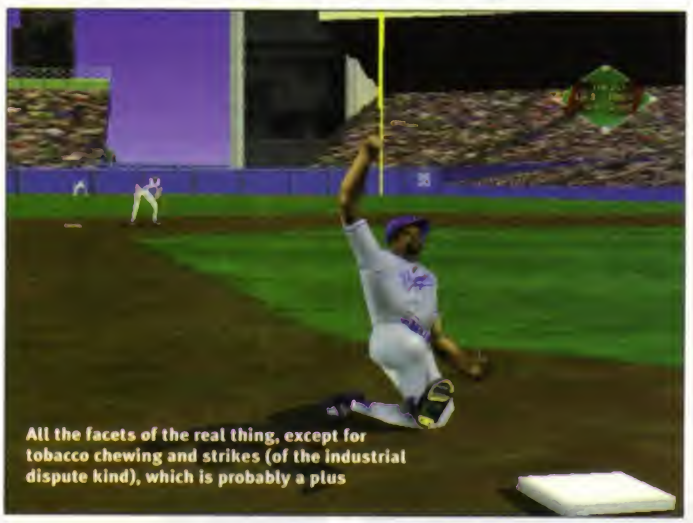
Against May be too stats-driven for some. Is turn-based strategy really the future?

Need P90, Win95, 16MB RAM, 1MB Video, 4xCD-ROM

Want P133, Win95, 32MB RAM, 2MB Video, 8xCD-ROM

VR SPORTS BASEBALL 97

You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll probably be hitting balls around actually... It's a baseball game, it just is.



All the facets of the real thing, except for tobacco chewing and strikes (of the industrial dispute kind), which is probably a plus

The EA Sports range of games is a good'n. In most cases, all the real names, all the stats, all the official licenses, and the all the real, respective, sports arenas have been jam-packed into the game next to the generally classy sim side of the title. For years now EA Sports have given us what we wanted, and for this, the EA Sports range has been known in the hearts of many avid gamers, as the king of a mighty genre. And just like in your favourite sports game, competition is healthy and brings out the best of the best. There have been a few contenders of the crown, but these have mostly been one off attempts and half assed buck makers. A couple of good knocks yes, but mostly they've been polite taps on the shoulder. VR Sports though, have provided EA with some decent competition. While their names look the same, and the two companies share many similarities (they both make great sports sims), the way to separate the two seems to be this - EA plays like a television sports game, while VR plays like you're actually there in the stadium.

Plus

http://www.vrsports.com/
Updates can be found here

Stats schmats

Not surprisingly, VRS Baseball 97 has all the stats and players and licenses of the real American Major League Baseball. For the stat lovers, there's percentages galore sorted across dozens of categories, and in the grand scheme of things, actually reflect what happens in a game. There's also full season play, All-Star Derby, and the old staple, exhibition play. For those wanting to get used to the pitchers throw, there's also a damn handy batting practice option. Run up to the plate and practice swinging your stick at the best pitches on offer. A great feature simply because getting the feel for the physics of the game in a real match and getting caned by the opposition at the same time is a rather demoralising thing. You can set the speed of the throw, type, and also a random setting to get your reaction speed on an upward curve.

Is 3D, is good

Got one of those new fangled 3D accelerator doobey-whackers yet? Get one. VR Sports Baseball 97 requires it. While Triple Play 98 looks a little more detailed, the result of using 3D graphics acceleration is giving the player a super smooth play. The visuals, while realistic, do look a bit dull though. Do you get frustrated with most sports games where every one seems to chugg along? It's even more frustrating with baseball - how do you translate the quick paced plays that give the game it's appeal when everyone chugs along? Whack in a card of joy and watch the players run about with some speed. Most other aspects pick up too. No longer is fielding such a chore - players actually respond well to your control and make catches - even off walls! The down side to this increase in speed is that things can get mighty confusing sometimes. The comp AI will make two out plays, but with things moving so quickly, you may end up hitting the lonely unassigned key when you meant to throw to home. Easy! Set your skill level to easy - it'll be handled for you! Pitchers will be less aggressive, and you'll actually win some games (difficulty being one off-putting factor in most baseballers). And for the batting? Intuitive. You have three types of swings, and can swing at three heights. The pitch and swing is poetry in motion - fluid, and downright realistic. I can still feel the tension as I get ready to read the pitch, and decide when and how to swing. If you miss, it feels like you missed for a reason, rather than being just a random event. Oh yeah. Baseball 97 is good.

March Stepnik

PC PowerPlay GOLD 91%

Category	Sports
Players	1-2
Publisher	VR Sports
Price	STBA
Rating	G
Available	Now
For	Baseball meets VR. Spectacular fielding.
Against	While looking crisp, it also looks a little dull.
Need	Win 95, P120, 16 MB RAM, 3D Accelerator.
Want	P150, 32 MB RAM.

3D NATIVE SUPPORT FOR: 3DFX, RENDITION V1000, RENDITION V2200, ATI 3D RAGE PRO

INTERNATIONAL RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

The latest in a string of new of Rally games, this version incorporates new features and add ons to improve the existing game.

This is touted as a "serious" rally driving game, and much attention has been paid to modelling the vehicles accurately. You can choose from 9 actual current model cars to drive in, with nitpicking attention to their details and on-road behaviour.

International Rally Championship has a lot of different forms of play and variables to include. You can obviously play it as a hard & fast Arcade or Championship game, or you can take it seriously and play the Time Trial or Simulation modes. In these last two your car takes damage realistically (i.e. smashed headlights), and will behave very unforgivably to mistakes in handling. Also, you can change the weather conditions and time of day for each track you play, for instance night modes and rain, fog etc.

There is the usual sort of track selections available, from jungle, snow, desert and alpine. You also have the trendy option to reverse, or "Mirror" each of the tracks to squeeze a bit more play out of them.

A minute to learn, and master

Despite the emporium of options available in the game, where it unfortunately comes apart is in the gameplay department. It's extremely easy to get into, but there is very little challenge in playing it well, and considering the conditions you are driving in, it's very easy to stay on the track, almost unrealistically so. Another point is the puzzling lack of emphasis on using the handbrake, which is a fairly integral part of Rally Driving, except it's all but overlooked, and not suitably modelled in this incarnation.

Additionally, the landscape is frankly quite drab. A conglomeration of random objects crammed into a horizon-height wedge really looks nasty in comparison with other current titles. Also, heaps of flat objects are rendered close to the track and really look very ordinary. It's a shame, considering the game's other merits, but it's something you really can't overlook.

Another sore point is the unusually level tracks! This is rally driving, and yet there is not a decent hill or valley to speak of. It's a world of unbelievable flatness, which only adds to the simplicity factor. Enough said, basically the landscape is a disappointment.

Rally driving as it was supposed to be... almost. Drab scenery, and a strange handbrake mechanism let IRC down a bit

Paddock thrash

That said, the cars look pretty damn good, and things like the headlight light-sourcing look quite cool. Although there is negligible external model effects applied to the cars when they get smashed. On the other hand, the techno soundtrack is really not bad at all and a nice little point of mention is the function whereby you can change the units displayed to Metric, so you can have Kilometres and other stuff we can read naturally, which is very accommodating for us advanced metric countries.

Also, the split screen play for IRC is probably the best I have seen, with unbelievably smooth play, an impressive achievement indeed. There is also 8-player network support. Being the game it is, it's quite good multiplayer, not fantastic but definitely playable.

Finally, I will mention the nifty replay control system where you can pause, fast forward and rewind as you watch the race replays, which is always nice for gloating over those multiplayer wins.

Overall not a bad game, but let down by several niggling sore points.

Ed Dawson

79%

Category	Driving sim
Players	2 split screen, 8 networked, 2 serial link
Publisher	Europress
Price	$TBA
Rating	G
Available	Now
For	Impressive list of options, great weather effects.
Against	The gameplay is sadly not all we expected, and the landscape graphics look pretty bleak in comparison to other current titles.
Need	P100, 16Mb RAM, Win95, 2 x CD ROM
Want	P166, 4 x CD ROM, Directx5
3D	3Dfx Glide

Caesar's Palace

CATEGORY	Gambling
PLAYERS	1-8 (network)
PUBLISHER	Interplay
PRICE	$TBA
RATING	TBA
AVAILABLE	Now
NEED	486 DX2/66, 8MB RAM, 2x CD
WANT	Lots of luck

overall

75%

All the fun of gambling without the risk of losing any money, made fairly pointless because there's no danger of winning any money either. The instructional movies are pretty funny though.

There's something special about a city with a (legal) casino in it, if only because they're usually open 24 hours and suddenly become an attractive option after a lengthy night on the town and some fairly hefty alcohol consumption. But in the cold light of day, stone cold sober, and only playing for pretend money, does gambling seem such a fun thing to while away the hours? Well, maybe...but maybe not. If it's the kind of thing that you think you'll enjoy, then Caesar's Palace offers just about everything to do with gambling, including cheesy bimbo's at the door, slimy and facetious 'helpers', and all the usual gambling devices.

There's 5 casino games to choose from, Blackjack, Craps, Roulette, Video Poker, and Slot Machines - and if you're not sure how to play any of the games, there's a nifty little avi to illustrate just why you're losing all your money, and here's where the bit about slimy and facetious helpers comes in. There's this guy who acts like he's modelled his career on Troy McLure's, and it's his job to explain what's going on, without actually mentioning the 'L' word. For instance; "Craps is a great game, you can win lots of money". He fails to mention that you can also lose lots of money, and usually will, which brings me to my next point.

Hi! I'm Trixie, your non-interactive host for the evening. Please come in! And remember; money is an abstract concept

Each time you begin Caesar's Palace, you either load an old character or create a new one. Once your character has lost all their money, that's it - there's nothing you can do. The result was that I had to restart with new characters 10 times in a row, and I wasn't even being all that silly with my bets. So I was left with a heightened realisation of a) Just how pointless pretend gambling is, and b) How likely you are to lose all your money. If you like this kind of thing, I guess it's quite a nice package though.

Gareth Jones

3D Ultra Pinball 3

CATEGORY	Pinball sim
PLAYERS	1-4
PUBLISHER	Sierra
PRICE	$TBA
RATING	G8+
AVAILABLE	Now
NEED	Win 95, 486 DX/66, 8MB RAM, 2X CD-ROM
WANT	Pentium 166, 32MB RAM, 10xCD-ROM

overall

77%

I'd rather go and play the real thing, but this has the power to put off the venture outdoors.

Pinball sims don't have be as pointless as they seem. While pumping in a few bucks, pulling back the trigger and tilting your way through hours of whirring lights, bells and whistles will never lose its charm over the digital version, pinball on the PC can be quite a bit of fun. Provided a few steps are taken to ensure a worthy imitation. Table design and features is something that even the real pinball makers strive to perfect, so that's one of the silent expectations of the PC conversion. Two things are most vital though. Speed and realistic physics. The absence of these two aspects in the short and rather pathetic history of the PC Pinball Sim has left a black mark on this genre. In real world terms, a great big "Out of Order" sign hangs off the rusty trigger.

3D Ultra Pinball - The Lost Continent is surprisingly a rather good pinball game. You thought Doom never needed a plot, then what the hell is a Pinball sim doing with one? Complete with introduction movie, you are part of a very diverse yet random team of travellers that crash land on a lost continent complete with vicious rubber Dinosaurs. This the epitome of crappy B movies. There's the lateral thinker/professor type character, the buff all brawn and just a touch of brain kinda guy, as well as the stunningly gorgeous starlet whose greatest strength seems to be being very vocal about the situation. With animations and dialogue going on around the table (with some handy hints from the team), you have to see them through the continent in safety and eventually off the cursed place. Yeah yeah. A nice little touch to help continuity and to keep things interesting, but it causes more problems than it does attempt to solve, and quite frankly, rather than wanting to save the team, you'll be hoping that they all get eaten by the next conveniently placed rubber dinosaur.

Help your intrepid explorers escape the dangerous dinosaur filled Lost Continent! With a ball-bearing! What the... Salvador Dali was less surreal than this!

As far as table design goes, 3D Pinball succeeds. As far as interesting traps and puzzles, 3D Pinball also succeeds. The two areas of let down though, are the speed and physics areas. Unless your computer smokes with hot video cards, you will notice slowdown whenever an animation is set off (frequently), which makes a game, like, unplayable. Secondly, the ball seems to stick and warp to places on the screen without obeying the normal laws of physics. Without these two aspects fine tuned, 3D Ultra Pinball remains just a decent pinball sim, with some innovative ideas.

March Stepnik

Streets of Sim City

Most of us will probably put up with crappy graphics for good gameplay, but I doubt many will be happy with crap gameplay, no matter how nice the graphics are. 'Streets' has nice graphics, but the gameplay leaves a hell of a lot to be desired.

The basic premise is that you get behind the wheel of a variety of cars, and drive around Sim City cities, either racing or completing missions. Sounds a little like Interstate '76? Well, just to reinforce (I didn't say 'cash in upon', but it fits just as well) the link, Maxis have gone for a real 1970's feel, which isn't really carried off. On top of this, you also kit out your car at the start of each mission with a variety of weapons ranging from rockets to mine droppers, along with a variety of engines, types, and shields to choose from. Sound familiar? It should, but if this is the kind of thing that gets your heart racing, I suggest you find a copy of I'76 from somewhere rather than spend a cent on this game.

The driving model, the meat and potatoes of any driving-based game is, to put it mildly, shithouse - it's unresponsive and nothing like real life, there's no reverse (instead you turn the camera angle around, and then press accelerate), and just plain annoying. Then there's the graphics, which are quite nice (the native 3Dfx version particularly), but even on a very high spec machine (PII 266) there's noticeable slow down when more than one moving object is on screen, which happens quite frequently. Then there's the missions themselves (mostly where you pick up a package and deliver it somewhere) which are either annoyingly hard, or annoyingly obtuse. In short, I liked the idea of this game, it could have been quite good, but the execution was pathetic.

Gareth Jones

It's the driving game for people who have played nothing but Sim City...

CATEGORY	'Driving' sim, sort of
PLAYERS	1-8 (network)
PUBLISHER	Maxis
PRICE	$TBA
RATING	G
AVAILABLE	Now
NEED	P166, 32MB RAM, 4xCD
WANT	PII 300, 64MB RAM, 24xCD

overall

30%

A nice idea, done terribly. Driving physics stink, and the missions and their structure is awful too. Buy it for someone you don't like.

Virtua Cop 2

Alert readers of this magazine will have noticed that I tend to be a little disparaging towards arcade-style console games. The truth is, most of them are really quite boring and silly. But every so often one pops up that I do find interesting and playable, and this is one of them. The first hurdle to overcome with Virtua Fighter 2 for any mature gamer is the content of the game itself. It's kind of like Die Hard (which should set alarm bells ringing in your head, I hope) - you're a cop who gets called in to defuse a variety of terrorist situations, and the way to go about this is by killing about 3000 bad guys with your trusty sidearm. It's not gratuitous violence, there's no blood spilt, and you lose points for killing innocent bystanders, though, so that makes it all OK.

But really, it's not about violence so much as it is about fast moving action on top of a pretty background. And pretty that background is - Sega have finally seen the light and included 3Dfx support as well as both Direct Draw and Direct 3D hardware modes. Fantastic! In terms of gameplay, Virtua Cop 2 is a winner. It's not the kind of game that you'll keep playing for months on end, but for a quick fix of fast and addictive gaming, VC2 is great fun. A really good blend of action, suspense and reflexes.

Control is through the mouse, joystick, or keyboard, and it's possible to have two players playing at once on the same computer (though using keyboard control is not recommended), as well as a sort of death match experience called the proving ground, which is quite cool as well. It's really a very fun game and though it won't be on my hard drive in 6 months time, for what it is, VC2 is big time fun.

Gareth Jones

You want some!!??!! You punk-ass gangsters ain't no match for me an' my... erm... trusty... ahh... mouse. Click... click... click...

CATEGORY	Rail shoot-em-up
PLAYERS	1-2(TCP/IP, IPX, Modem)
PUBLISHER	Sega
PRICE	$TBA
RATING	MA 15+
AVAILABLE	Now
NEED	P75, 8MB RAM, 4x CD
WANT	P133, 16MB RAM, 8x CD

overall

78%

A quality fast, fun and furious rail shooter, converted for the PC very well both in terms of gameplay and graphics.

Civ 2 - Fantastic Worlds

CATEGORY	Strategy
PLAYERS	1 (still!!!)
PUBLISHER	Micrprose
PRICE	$29.95
RATING	G8+
AVAILABLE	Now
NEED	486/33, 8MB RAM, Win 3.x/95, Civ 2 original version, 2 X CD
WANT	P90, 16MB RAM

overall

68%

An interesting twist to the usual historical simulations, that will help to fill in time while we continue to wait for the multiplayer version. Nice scenario editor too.

Civilisation 2 is one of the all time greats without doubt. But it's been a long while since the initial release, and because of Microprose's (when they were a part of Spectrum Holobyte) bastard tactics regarding the release of a multiplayer patch, your interest may have waned a little. Finally, there is a multiplayer version in the works - the kicker is that you will be forced to pay for something that should have been included with the game in the first place. Anyway, this isn't a diatribe about Microprose, this is about the 'Fantastic Worlds' scenario pack being sold under the Microprose name.

And, for what it is, it's not a bad little add-on. The scenarios aren't authentic historical situations, instead they're mostly 'what if' type situations, or fantasy scenarios. For instance, what would have happened in America wasn't settled by white people? Well, here's where you come in, taking on the role of an Amer-Indian tribe and dealing with all the other Amer-Indian tribes. Also, what about if the Dinosaurs hadn't died out? Well, as strange as it may sound, you become the leader of one of the dinosaur tribes, and research your way up the evolutionary ladder. Then there's the silly ones like the X-Com scenario, which is kind of like...well...X-Com. I didn't like this one so much - there's no research or development, only fighting, and that's not really what Civ 2 is about. Other than that, there's fantasy scenarios (Midgaard, human colonies on Mars, and Atlantis) as well as a scenario editor. With this you can make up entire scenarios, or edit existing ones and the interface is quite nice too. Everything from sound effects to icons are included, making a complete customisation possible. Overall, It's good, and the price might make it look very attractive, but if you're as cynical as me you might strongly suspect that scenario packs such as this may well be included in the Civ 2 multiplayer boxed version, when it is finally released. But if you simply can't wait...

Gareth Jones

What if dinosaurs never died out? Well, we'd probably eat them until they did! More meat!

Need for Speed 2 SE

CATEGORY	Racing
PLAYERS	1-8 (network, modem/null modem, split screen(!!)
PUBLISHER	Electronic Arts
PRICE	$79.95
RATING	G
AVAILABLE	Now
NEED	P90, 16mb, Win95, Directx 5, 4xCD, 10MB Hd space
WANT	3dfx card(only!), P166, 32Mb Ram, Joystick, 80Mb Hd

overall

80%

The classic Action-Racer Sequel returns, this time with 3dfx support, 4 new cars and an extra track. Can we be seduced with such offerings?

The Need For Speed series has always been a haven for racing game tourists and people who like nice cars, but have no illusions about the probability of them ever getting one. These games have always filled the niche between airhead racers like Big Red Racing, and scientifically pedantic games like Grand Prix 2. They're fun to play and have a certain depth to the physics modelling, but your car never takes damage and causing other cars to pile up is often half the fun of winning. You can also use your handbrake for turns and do burnouts, donuts and everything like that which the real cars can do, which is extremely cool and good clean fun.

From the beginning this game has been crying out for 3D acceleration, and now that we have it things are noticeably smoother, faster, better.

This basically means you can run it in hi-res at a decent frame rate, smoke off the tyres now creates a semi transparent fog, rain and mist effects are just awesome and the game never slows down for anything. All good reasons to give your 3dfx card a workout with this one.

Along with that there have been marked improvements in the landscape models, as well as an interesting method of getting more life out of the courses, which lets you drive them in Reverse, or Mirrored. This is a great idea and should lend a bit of lifespan to the game after you know all the tracks one way!

Unfortunately the Cops that we miss so much from NFS1 have not been added to the SE version. Shame really, but you can still turn on Random Traffic by typing "Rushhour" at the main menu screen.

All in all, the game really rocks with 3D enhancement. If you had any inclination towards previous versions of NFS, then this is game is a must-have!

Ed Dawson

Want a serious driving sim? - buy TOCA or GP2. Want a futuristc racer? - buy POD or Wipeout. Want to do the fun illegal stuff? - buy NFS2

Blood Plasma Pak

Blood was probably the most notable of the games assembled under the "Build" engine by 3D Realms, and on top of that, has always been at the forefront of intestinal fireworks. Not a single other game can claim to have so much interaction with the contents of your enemies dead bodies.

Kicking the detached heads of slain zombies through goalposts was an experience all its own, and now we have an Expansion for that very game! The mind boggles.

So what's to expand? Firstly, the weapons. You might have expected some entirely new weapons, in the vein of add-on packs, but unfortunately all we have is new modes for the old ones. The Incinerator fireball-gun thing can now launch a cluster bomb which roasts a large area, the Tesla Cannon can now be used in Guns Akimbo mode (whoohoo), and the Life Leech (read: skull on a stick) weapon can now placed in a strategic position, whereby it becomes an automatic sentry gun.

The new enemies we have are, again, basically extensions of what we already had. 3 new kinds of human enemies; Elite Cultists who wield Tesla Cannons, Ackolytes who throw Dynamite, and Priests who have the ability to morph into more powerful creatures. Also, there are 2 "Killer Plant" enemies; Pods, who spit sticky poison, and the bigger Fire Pods, who shoot fire at you(duh). The new Boss monster, "The Beast" is a big wolf-man type thing, which scratches and bites you, etc. Of course, these new creatures present a little more variety to the game and are harder to kill, but their movement formulas and general behaviour are still extremely predictable, on top of the fact that they still look like eight-sided flat pictures.

The new episode, "Post Mortem" is more of the same levels, basically. Square walls and flat surfaces, drab textures, and heaps of flat sided monsters to blow into chunks. The deathmatch levels are actually quite good, but by this stage most people have progressed to the next generation of 3D games to play, so it reaches us a little too late.

Ed Dawson

Violence & gore - these are all any self-respecting gamer wants, aren't they?... no, I didn't think so

3D

WWW.GTISONLINE.COM
3DFX SUPPORT IS YET TO BE RELEASED FOR BLOOD BUT YOU CAN REGISTER YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS TO BE NOTIFIED WHEN IT HAPPENS.

CATEGORY	1st person add-on
PLAYERS	1-8 Network, 2 over Modem/Serial Link
PUBLISHER	GT Interactive
PRICE	STBA
RATING	MA15+
AVAILABLE	Now
NEED	Commercial version of Blood, P75, 16Mb RAM, 80Mb HDD, 4xCD, Dos 6.2/Win 95
WANT	P166, 32Mb RAM, Bucket.

overall

55%

Not enough new stuff to get us excited, and the engine looks really dated compared to, well, anything currently capturing our attention.

Magic the Gathering: Spells of the Ancients

Once upon a time the release of a new set of Magic cards meant descending into a world of chaos. Tiny gamestores jam packed with fellow Magic freaks, all scrambling for as many cards as their wallets would allow. The highlight of this hysteria was the poor unfortunate who disappeared under a mob of screaming diehards just because he made the mistake of saying out loud "Wow, is this Black Lotus I've got worth much?". How things have changed. You can now walk into a quiet software shop, hand over some cash and walk out with the latest Magic expansion on CD-ROM without any bruises.

Spells of the Ancients is brimming with cards that these days have more chance lying in a secured bank vault than in any of our meagre personal collections. The Icy Manipulator and multi-colored lands are only some of the 130 cards included that span the Antiquities, Arabian Nights and Unlimited sets. While as expected you can incorporate all of these sexy new cards in your Shandalar adventures or straight duelling with the AI, the big newcomer is the Sealed Deck tournament. From a limited amount of starter and booster packs, a playable deck has to be put together and then played in a tournament ladder against a variety of AI opponents. Problem is that the computer is completely unable to construct viable decks, rendering the tournament a big non-starter. That's a huge shame.

There's no easy way to say it. Spells of the Ancients does not include the eagerly (repeat eagerly 10 times for effect) anticipated multi-player add-on. Have a good scream and bite the dog, it's disappointing. Don't fret too much though as multi-player Magic in the form of Manalink should be available for free download by the time you are reading this...yippee! Spells of the Ancients will be snapped up by Magicholics purely because any expansion will be highly prized when multi-player becomes a reality. If solo play is your main concern the new cards will add to your duelling, but the missed opportunity of the Sealed Deck option due to poor AI is a big sticking point.

Pete Sharpe

Magic: the Gathering - sort of like Willy Wonka's Golden ticket, but without the chocolate to sweeten the disappointment upon realising there is nothing of worth in the packet.

CATEGORY	Strategy
PLAYERS	1
PUBLISHER	Microprose
PRICE	$29.95
RATING	G
AVAILABLE	Now
NEED	P100, 16Mb RAM, Win 95, 4 X CD, original copy of Magic The Gathering,
WANT	That'll do.

overall

70%

New cards are worthwhile, but Sealed Deck option is weak.

Guitropolis

DATAFLOW $89.95

Guitropolis is, as the name suggests, 'an adventure in learning to play the guitar', and while the box may look tacky indeed, for aspiring strummers this is one to look out for. In fact, Guitropolis even comes with the stamp of approval from Next Publishing's very own Australian Guitar magazine, and even for the complete novice it's a useful and fun resource to have at hand.

It's more than merely a guitar tutor, Guitropolis 'makes learning fun' by including a number of different games like, for example, the tuning game where you have to tune a guitar by ear before it explodes (don't ask why). Then there's the card game, where you have to match musical notes in a memory-like card game, as well as plenty of others. In all there's around 10 different locations in the world of Guitropolis, each with a different (and gradually more advanced) lesson and game. They aren't easy though, don't expect to run through them all in a couple of hours. The whole idea is to practice the lessons more than a couple of times before you move on to the next stage, eventually culminating in a 'live' performance with your newly formed band and all the associated media kudos.

It's presented with humour (each section has a different tutor, and they're all pretty funny, or at least entertaining), and the lessons start right from the beginning, explaining just what those little squiggly note things are, where to hold the guitar, what different types of guitars do, through to playing riffs and so on. For your accomplished guitar player, this might be a little too simple, but for the complete novices through to your casual players, Guitropolis is bound to contain plenty to keep you satisfied (and it also comes with a couple of Guitropolis guitar picks and a nice poster for reference too). We're still not sure why the guy from the box is wearing that atrocious wig though....

WORLD BOOK Discoveries

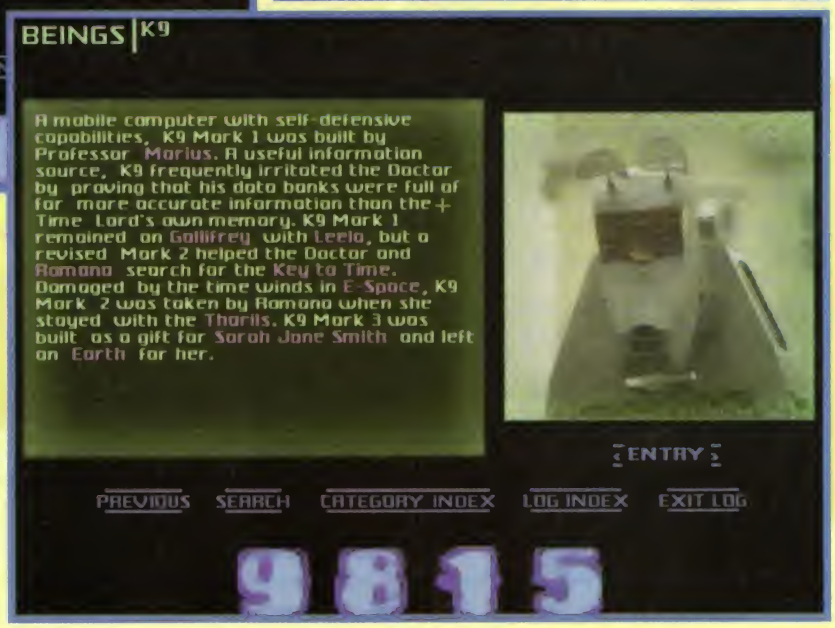
DATAFLOW $99.95

Encyclopedias can be wonderful things, both for research to get information when you need it, and also for general pleasure during a slack half hour. They're great for cruising through the annals of history, picking out tidbits of information to casually drop into conversation in an effort to appear more intelligent and interesting that you really are, but encyclopedias need information. While pictures and animations help to present a coherent and concise layout of events, text is still the most important part of the whole experience. Unfortunately, this is the area where Discoveries falls down - there just isn't nearly enough information contained within to make it a worthwhile experience, even though it's comprised of five whole CD's (or one DVD).

The interface is fabulous though, stunningly pretty, and easily one of the best parts of the experience. There are a number of ways to access the information, but the nicest is through the 'timeline' feature, which is where you find yourself in a hallway a bit like at a gallery, in a first person perspective, and as you move down the halls you see pictures on each side of you, which can all be clicked on for more information about that area. There are five halls in total, each containing information about separate times (for example, the first hall has stuff from the 'Big Bang' through to A.D. 1000). But the information contained, as I said, isn't all that comprehensive - and in due fairness this set does cover events from the dawn of time right up until the present, but still...for a five CD set, I came away just a little disappointed with how much was skimmed over. The pictures are great, and the ability to zoom in and hear commentary about discrete areas was a very nice way to use the medium, as was the addition of an internet link for downloading of more information. But for an in-depth informational source we'd suggest that you look elsewhere.

Dr Who - Destiny of the Doctors

BBC Interactive/Roadshow



Oh yes, the Doctor is back. Well, all seven of them are, actually. But how can all seven Doctors be in the one place at the one time? That nasty old arch nemesis, the Master, has to be involved somewhere along the line, and surely enough he is. He's concocted another yet evil plot to destroy the Doctor/s and take over the entire world, by imprisoning them in some sort of space/time flux thingo, and it's up to you to save them. Well, not you exactly, but an amorphous blob called Graak created from pure psychic energy by the Doctor/s to take on the Master in his fiendishly nasty combat arena called the Determinant. And it's a pretty fiendish place too, (well, the Master is a pretty fiendish guy), filled with just about every alien from the Doctors travels, all trying to get in his way and drain Graak's psychic energy levels until he dissipates back into nothingness. So off you trot, as this Graak creature, trying to save each doctor in turn (including the very first Doc, for whom some very grainy footage is included). What it all boils down to is a cheap and tacky Doom style environment, with blocky sprites as adversaries, some fairly silly puzzles to solve (though they do involve studying the Dr Who lore if you're not familiar with the stories), and apart from the occasionally interesting video sequences (all from the TV series), it's all a bit of a snore fest.

In fact, I heartily recommend that you don't bother to play the game very much at all unless you're a hard-core Doctor Who fan - you'll only end up disappointed. On the plus side, however, the Dr Who encyclopedia (called the 'City Of Thoughts', and accessible through the T.A.R.D.I.S console) that is included as part of the game is mostly great, and it is where I ended up spending most of my time, reading about and remembering all the inhabitants, places, and things from the Doctor Who universe. The amount of cross referenced information contained is very impressive, and apart from some very low-res pictures (which goes a long way towards ruining the experience), this is by far the best part of the game. So, as a game, DW-DOTD bites, and seems like a fairly crass attempt to cash in upon the good Doctors name, but as an encyclopedia, it's really quite good. (I still hate that guy from All Creatures Great and Small though - as a Doctor he was a sad joke).

G.J.

It's the question that divided post-pubescent adolescents everywhere: who was better looking - Sarah-Jane, Leela, Jo Grant, or Brigadier Lethbridge-Stewart?

The Lost World: Chaos Island

DREAMWORKS INTERACTIVE/MICROSOFT

Jurassic Park, being a bit of a groundbreaker in terms of computer graphics, it seems only right we should get something interesting from it to plug into Ye Olde PC, and this is a pretty refreshing approach to film-game conversion, to say the least.

The premise is this: you're marooned on the Chaos Island with the Dinosaurs, and you have to fight your way across it and through a series of adventures to finally escape. For each scenario, you have to pick which characters from the film have the best chance of surviving. You then control them during the mission to build a homebase, collect air drops of resources and dinosaur eggs from the wilderness in order to construct more shelters and hatch tame dinosaurs to aid you in your journey. When you begin you only have little insect-eaters, but as you progress you get more powerful large herbivores and eventually carnivores like the Velociraptor and T-Rex. Standing in your way are wild dinosaurs, merciless hunters and their own trained giant reptiles.

The interesting part of is that all of this process occurs inside the bounds of realtime strategy, a realm rarely used for film conversion, but it has been done with a good amount of taste, and it really does bring its own special flavour to this tried and true format.

It's probably best described as Warcraft-ish, but with more emphasis on your all important explorers staying alive, and using the more numerous, unintelligent Dinosaurs to take place in combat for you as much as possible.

There are twelve missions to undertake in the game, of gradually increasing difficulty. Needless to say they won't present any opposition to a Total Annihilation veteran, but that is definitely not what this game is designed for. It's a bit of a laugh, it sparkles with quality production values and it's a very faithful adaption from the popular motion picture, even if it is aimed at those in the younger age brackets.

Ed Dawson

It's actually better than the movie, but then again, so is a dose of the clap...

Goosebumps: Attack of the Mutant

(Based on the Comic Books by R.L. Stine)

DREAMWORKS INTERACTIVE/MICROSOFT

Spielberg's Dreamworks Interactive - buckets of money to play with and plenty of talent too

The animated intro sets the scene: You're hanging out, on the bus, reading a Goosebumps comic, old people get on, someone else gets off, blah blah. You read further along, time passes, it all gets a bit hazy. The characters seem to be shouting... No! it's just the bus driver telling us to bugger off, it's the end of the line. Upon getting out, you're amazed at the huge pink Castle looming before you. You rapidly check the Comic book... It's the same castle which had that crazy Mutant guy in it, Brou-Ha-Ha-Hah!! And there the adventure begins. Armed only with your Comic Book, you approach the foreboding Purple Doorway...

The Goosebumps world is a cool crazy place where the weirdest stuff happens, and that's the whole point! It's a world of funky colours, quirky concepts and Superheroes of a definitely tongue-in-cheek persuasion. A world where friendly insects help you out by eating dangerous Leaf Monsters, if only you'll open the flyscreen for them! And every corner holds a new surprise. It's a total conversion of a Comic Book story by the children's author R.L Stine, which impressively enough turns out looking like a Doom Clone!

Indeed, it's a totally interactive 3D environment, only rendered in excellent primary Comic-Book style, with crazy lines and colourful splashes. You can wander around and explore this whole world which really looks and feels like a comic book story. It has a feast of funky sound effects, tricky little places and auto-triggered cartoon animations when you eavesdrop or arrive at a certain junction in the game, which gel absolutely perfectly with the rest of the experience. Forget those: "interactive comics". Why bother, when you can be completely immersed, and live every cheesy moment in whiz-bang 3D!

Star Wars Monopoly

It's crass, it's pathetic, it's a shameless revenue raising exercise, and it'll probably sell millions

I dunno....maybe this is pushing things just a liiiiiitle bit too far. I mean, Star Wars is a fantastic series, and there have been more than a few great Star Wars based games, but Monopoly? What does Star Wars have to do with Monopoly? Absolutely nothing, but thanks to a face lift of the old holiday snore-fest by Hasbro and LucasArts, there's nary an Old Kent Road or Mayfair to be seen. Yes, this time around you're bidding for places like the swamp of Dagobah, the Imperial Palace on Coruscant, the Death Star, and so on. But wait, that's not all! Rather than use a shoe or iron, or top hat, you get to choose from Luke, Han, Leia, R2D2, Boba Fett, or Chewbacca and we're not talking about static figures either. All the characters walk, run, and jump to their allotted square. And there's still more! C-3PO is the banker, and everytime something happens he'll pop up with some very helpful advice, like 'Master Luke has just rolled a six! He's now going to buy the Swamp of Dagobah'. Great! And, yes, there's still more! Everytime you land on a square, you get a little cut from the movie to explain just what it is you've landed upon. Now, you might be thinking that, as boring as Monopoly can be, adding window dressing like this might just push it over the edge into the 'really bloody annoying' category - but no! It's fantastic! Best game ever! Not a crass attempt to make even more cash from the Star Wars name combined with a well established 'family friendly' game. No, nothing of the sort! Shoppers, you simply must buy this product now! Don't be the only house on your street that doesn't contain a copy of Star Wars Monopoly, because this is something that all the cool people will own. *G.J*

3D Tech News

Jere Lawrence

New 3D or new CPU?

I just read your article about 3D accelerator/graphics cards in your "Hot Hardware Guide 98", seeing how powerful the Apocalypse 5D is, I also saw the price tag of $539. I own a P100 with 16 megs of RAM and some strange S3 Vision 868 graphics card, my point is, I can buy a new off the shelf P166MMX with all the standards (16meg RAM, 2gig hard drive), for $999. What should I do?! Buy the new card and will it beef up my machine (will it or not?), or fork out more cash for the new machine which has a newer mother board and things like SDRAM, or even buy a different graphics card to the 5D. My motherboard is quite old and I don't think the CPU can be upgraded.

P.S- The price for the new computer is in N.Z Dollars.

Damien Edwards
New Zealand

Greetings Damien,

You may have noticed from the review that the Apocalypse 5D only really becomes a fighting force if you own a Pentium 200 and above. Owning a P100, it won't help you at all.

That said, are you happy with the speed of your P100 for Windows performance? If you are, go and get a 3Dfx, it will accelerate a lot of games and be cheaper than a new machine.

If you aren't happy with your current Windows performance, upgrade to a P200 and get an Apocalypse 5D, but remember, as per the review, we still suggest having a 3Dfx as some software is 3Dfx native. (I hate missing out on anything :))

On the other hand, the Rendition V2200 (due soon) is quite an attractive card and with its DVD abilities it is looking like an Apocalypse 5D beater. I've been using the V2100 for over a month now and it has performed admirably. The 2200 with its extra features, despite appalling DOS support, might finally spell a Rendition victory. Until we get a 2200 to test however we can't officially comment.

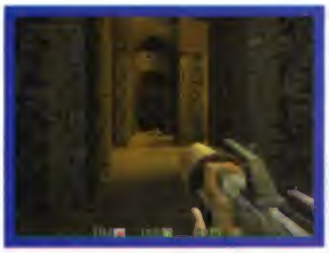
Quake 2

Quake 2, Quake 2, Quake 2, Quake 2, Quake 2, Quake 2 (and let the chanting continue on forever).

Quake 2 is here and no, I'm not a Quake/ID junkie, far from it, With Quake 2 however, I am a recent convert. I actually never really liked Quake, I like many others thought the graphics were painfully bland and although the action was ok, it wasn't enough to really keep me interested. That and the fact that it really wasn't that fast on all but the best machines at the time.

Come the 3D Blaster however, Quake suddenly looked better and played quickly, but it didn't take long before you realised that it just wasn't enough. Quake still lacked an essential element, that being the story. In Quake, you never really felt like you were part of something, or what you were doing made any kind of difference. It was just you versus "insert scary monsters here". Ok, that might have been enough for a lot of people but for me there were numerous other more immersive games to occupy my time.

Whether by the influences of Paul Steed, or even possibly letters from a lot of people thinking the same way I did, it seems that iD Software haven't come of age in Quake 2, but instead (and to put it maybe a little insultingly), have grown up. The impression I got from the talent at iD



Quake 2: Monsters with a much higher polygon count makes for prettier monsters - but does this mean there are less of then to save on processor load? Remember that level in Doom 2 where about twenty imps suddenly teleported into a small room, and you panicked? Well, that probably won't happen with polygon monsters for a while yet

based on the numerous interviews I read from them on the Net, was that in their opinion, the only thing that mattered to people was the violence in Doom/Quake and an advanced 3D engine. As they seem to have learnt the reality is that consumers want more from a game then just action and engines, they desire a totally immersive experience.

For an immersive experience, Quake 2 delivers in every way, plus so much more. For starters there are cut scenes, the intro scene being absolutely spectacular. Giving as little away as possible, it sets the scene for you and a series of other space marines to take over the alien home world who threaten the extinction of earth. It's the way the marines are sent down though which brings a smile to your dial. They're packed into bombs and launched from a massive starship into the base on the planets surface. Ok, it's a total ripoff of Heinlein's Starship Troopers but damn, it looks good!

The effect however is carried through all the levels where you see other marines "bombs/capsules" emptied and them dead a few corridors on, or taken as prisoners. It actually makes you feel like you're part of an elite troop sent to destroy the alien menace.

There's also one other factor that gives you the total immersion experience and although it isn't constant throughout the game, it's plentiful enough to carry that you through to the end, it's radio chatter.

Whilst completing the first Primary objective (there are no levels now, just objectives) reports filter in from marines all around you, the effect is mesmerizing. Whilst stomping through corridor's laying waste to alien scum, to hear the combat from marines at the bridge ahead brings a feeling of immersion into the game that is truly unparalleled in the 1st person action genre. There's also nice spot effects such as dropships that zoom by overhead and damaged equipment that sparks away to scare the crap out of you when you least expect it.

Combat too is a most amazing affair. Alien cyborgs will actually lift their arm (if it's a gun for example) at you and shoot. A Quake 2 magic moment of mine was to sneak up behind a cyborg, blow off his head with a super shotgun and then watch as his twitching body unloaded all his ammo into the other alien in front of him. It doesn't come any better then that.

I had best get onto the 3D side though before this turns into a Quake 2 rave, er review. The most appealing 3D facet of Quake 2 is that the polygon count on enemies has been dramatically upped. There are no more Quake triangular "pizza slice" faces, instead, properly modeled heads actually look like "a head".

Other features include fully 3D animated weapons. The chain gun for example features a spinning barrel as you fire that actually winds down when you take your finger off the trigger.

Textures are now extremely well mip mapped (using different sized textures to represent near and far) and unlike Quake where you could see mip mapping seams, in Quake 2, they are truly unidentifiable. Lighting effects are also spectacular with certain gun shots lighting up objects as their shot travels. Talk about moving light sources, in Quake 2 the object will refract on multiple surfaces correctly for each surface. Also, when walking under different coloured lights, the colour of your weapon will refract the lights colour such as blue, red and yellow, among other colours.

Quake 2 is both a 3D masterpiece in terms of utilisation of 3D technology and immersive playability. The 3D in Quake 2 is truly ground breaking in terms of polygon count and frame rate, and the immersion factor is now altitudinous. After playing Quake 2 for about 5 hours straight, I went to have a sit down on the lounge. The adrenaline was still pumping and sitting alone in a big house by myself, I was convinced that any moment a borg was going to jump out at me. I was totally freaked, it rocked.

It seems almost a policy here at PowerPlay that nothing gets %100, but Quake 2 to me for an all out encompassing gaming experience is truly %100 material. Be sure to buy it.

Quake 2 is out now and supports all OpenGL compatible cards. Open GL cards we know of are the 3Dfx, PowerVR and we're told the Riva has beta Open GL drivers available to test with.

Heavy Gear

Here's one for you. What do you do when after turning a stagnant dull board game into a multi million dollar hit series of computer games, the company of said dull board game takes the license off you and gives it to another company that never meets its deadlines?

What do you do? You turn to their competitors and release an

(left) In this situation, your primary target is a bridge. Notice how here, a texture is being used to represent the bridge.
(above) Here is the same series of bridges closer up. Notice how now a 3D object for the bridge is laid over the texture. It's a very clever and convincing effect

infinitely more exciting computer game based on their dull boring board game. Oh, and if you're like me, you also walk up to turn coat company and flip them off, repeatedly.

Who knows whether the part between Activision and FASA was an amiable one, and frankly who cares because Heavy Gear is infinitely more fun then any of the Mech Warrior games ever were.

That isn't to say that Mech Warrior 2 wasn't a lot of fun, but the combat was getting rather tired. After all, how long can you play a game that involves walking in circles around enemy units firing away. Being tied into a license also means that you don't have much option to change units around with. Heavy Gear then is a breath of fresh air because the combat is vastly different and a lot more playable.

The first new facet of the Gears (that's what they're now called - sounds kinda druggy huh?) is that they can strafe, i.e. move left and right. Other features include secondary movement systems, i.e. wheels. At first sight, the wheels do look rather camp, but after you speed away from a plethora of enemies on them, you realise they come in extremely handy.

From the 3D side, Heavy Gear's engine is very nice. Firstly, all the Gears are textured with varying textures over their many faces. In the Mech Warrior series of games, textures were pretty much reserved to the occasional decal with one other armour texture making up the rest of the Mech.

The landscape in Heavy Gear now features rolling mountains, as opposed to the more painful symmetric though functional at times Mech warrior mountain-scapes. They look good, but strangely enough, aren't anywhere near the quality of the mountains in Mech Warrior Mercenaries which were exceptional.

Other nice 3D features are 3D animation from the Gears. You can crouch behind objects, pick up other weapons and even be knocked to the ground where you have to stand up again. Falling down was the weakest of the scripted animations with the Gear just literally hitting the ground like it's having an epileptic fit. It would have been much nicer to see the gears actually knocked to the ground from the force of the blow.

Overall, the Heavy Gear 2 environment engine still resembles the Mech Warrior 2 engine, but the handling of the Gears has changed to accommodate the new style of play. These new combat physics are wonderful and make the game a lot more playable then any of the Mech Warriors titles. Heavy Gear is a pleasant fragrance to the becoming stale Walking/Stomping Robotic/Mechanized assault genre that these games fall into.

Heavy Gear is available now and supports all Direct 3D accelerated cards with specific support for the 3Dfx and Rendition.

Sabre Ace

Sabre Ace has previously been reviewed in PowerPlay by the very talented Major Ian Lindgren (See PowerPlay Issue 18 page 84), however there are some worthy 3D technology advancements made by Sabre Ace that we thought deserving of mention here in 3D Tech News.

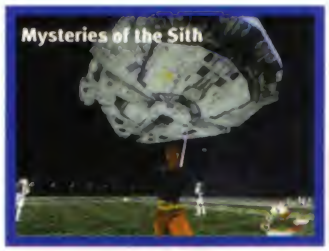
The most visually appealing aspect of Sabre Ace is the terrain and 3D object inclusion. All the ground texturing is dramatically different and seems to reflect actual real scenery. There are however some mixed feelings regarding the texturing. Everyone agrees that from a high altitude, it looks great, however when you get closer to the ground it looks awful.

I investigated this further and discovered that it seems the mip mapping is kicking in within too close a proximity at low altitude, which causes a type of tearing along the ground textures. It's not actually a fault, it's just that the textures seem to be calibrated for higher altitude flying. From Virgin Interactive's point of view, they probably feel damned if they do and damned if they don't. Games that use a singular reoccurring texture for the ground don't suffer this problem, but are slammed for being dull and repetitive. Games such as Sabre Ace that use many textures to paint a complex landscape receive criticism that it looks bad at low altitude. While others found it distracting though, I have to say it didn't really bother me at all, it was rather like playing Flight Unlimited except with guns and napalm.

The most clever facet of all the texture usage though is a technique (that we have no name for, though I'm sure one will be invented) where textured ground scenery is mixed with an actual 3D object.

The way this works is if you're approaching a runway for example, from a distance, the runway will be represented as a texture, perfectly blending in with the other textured scenery. As you get nearer however, a polygonal 3D runway will overlay the runway in the texture. This effect is also used for primary targets such as bridges and oil refineries etc. The effect is actually seamless and masterful in its execution and I suspect one that other sim makers will be eager to copy.

Sabre Ace is also incredibly fast. Despite the vast number of textures below in the ground scenery the frame rate is always



very high. Especially for the external views where things are prone to choke. Most importantly, Sabre Ace is also a lot of fun. With no pesky SAM's to spoil your day, air combat and ground attack is basically a whole lot of fun. Moreso I have to say, than a number of other sims. Another one to add to the "Gaming shelf".

Sabre Ace is available now and supports all Direct 3D accelerated cards.

Quick Bytes

Prey - Apogee

This info is direct from the design team of Prey, and their comments regarding its progress.

"On the design side, we have nailed down our vision for the first episode of the game, and Matt Wood and John Anderson are pounding away on their assigned levels. Allen Dilling is putting together some final actor models that he'll soon turn over to Scott McCabe for texturing. Then, it's time to assemble some of our primary weapons from their mishmash of seemingly discontinuous content design, the DLL behaviour code, the model, the textures, the animation, the sounds, and the pyrotechnics. On the story front, the entire saga of Prey has been sculpted in rough form. Now I'm working through the arduous process of tuning the story. All elements, character archetypes, plot events, motivations, forces, and derivative story elements, need to be checked and balanced"

It's looking rather unfinished really. With the release of Quake 2 though, will it be too little too late?

Flying Corps Gold

Empire Interactive/Rowan

It's not often you catch a sim that takes your breath away. Even with 3D acceleration, same texture ground texturing is making it all look rather ordinary, well, bilinear filtered ordinary anyway. Take a look at the Flying Corps Gold screenshots then. Using a texturing technique similar to Sabre Ace, this is one game that looks incredibly good.

Space Bunnies Must Die

Ripcord

Ripcord, the people responsible for the stupid and senseless Postal have obviously realised that you need to release an interesting/playable game to actually make money. Enter Space Bunnies Must Die.

Space Bunnies features Allison, a well-endowed and scantily-dressed truckstop waitress bent on revenge after alien rabbits invade Earth and capture her sister. Featuring a very Tomb Raider-like gameplay environment with similar action and adventure elements, Space Bunnies takes place in the catacombs of the Bunny death camps. You can utilize your many acrobatic talents to progress through the levels, and you can also have animals (each with his own special, unique, or downright weird talents) help in the quest as you meet them.

Space Bunnies will feature Direct 3D support.

It had to happen - a rip off of Lara, featuring another scantily clad lass with Hollywood dimensions. And it's no real surprise that it comes from a group like Ripcord either

Front Page Sports Ski Racing

Sierra/Dynamix

FPS Ski Racing will allow you to swoosh with the best over six courses from locations in Europe and North America. The game will feature weather, snow types, (packed powder, powder, ice, etc) and temperature which can all be adjusted. Skiing is damn fun (and fast) in real life and FPS Ski Racing looks like it could deliver some fine thrill seeking moments.

FPS Ski Racing will support Direct 3D

Screamer 2 3DFX

Virgin Interactive

The wait is finally over, the official Voodoo/Voodoo Rush patch for Screamer 2 has been released by Virgin. We'll try and grab a Screamer 2 to test for ourselves and report further on it.

Jedi Knight: Mysteries of Sith

Lucasarts

Following on from Jedi Knight, Mysteries of Sith will feature a well-developed storyline which will unfold over the course of its 14 new single-player levels. The new locales include the Rebel base under attack, the interior of an Imperial asteroid, a Katrasii Space Port, a Rebel Escort ship, a swamp, and the Sith Temple. Among the new characters to battle are the Rancor Monster (from Jabba's Palace in Return of the Jedi), Vornskrs (from Timothy Zahn's books), Ysalamiri (force-negating lizards from Zahn's books), Dianoga (from Shadows of the Empire), Swamp Wampa, an Ithorian (Hammerhead), a Torture Droid, a TIE pilot, and an Assassin Droid.

Also included are 15 new multiplayer levels, 10 are deathmatch levels and five are for the new Kill the Fool with the Ysalamiri. You'll also be able to do battle with three new multiplayer personas: a Rebel/ Imperial soldier, a bounty hunter, and a Scout (sniper/spy).

THRUSTMASTER
Nascar Pro Racing wheel

Not everyone has the mechanical aptitude and dedication of Grazza, a true deviant and certified PowerPlay freak, who made his own steering wheel from an old Holden wheel and a couple of ball bearings and told us all about it in PCPP # 17. Thankfully Thrustmaster have stepped into the breach and come up with a decent steering wheel. They've gone with the external gear lever setup of their previous wheels, but have now managed to fit two buttons on the wheel itself. This is much better than Thrusty's previous effort in the wheel department, the T2, still gone for the squeezed (and, arguably, realistic) look, whereby both brake and accelerator pedals are as far to the right as possible leaving acres of unused space to the left on the footrest. We ask again - why? Then there's the way that the pedals stick up, almost at 90 degrees to the ground. After a lot of fiddling (and cursing) we did manage to jam the pedals into a position that was comfortable, but what's wrong with using a slightly less 'authentic', but eminently more comfortable setup? In all seriousness though, the Nascar Pro is still a quality wheel, and at **$349.95** it isn't the cheapest around, but still well worth a look if you're in the market because you've just bought a wonderful driving game....like TOCA, perhaps.

and apart from a suspiciously wobbly wheel the Nascar Pro works excellently. The footprint required on the desktop is comparatively small, and the clamps included will fit in with most people's desktops easily. They are plastic, and there is the potential for degradation over time, but apart from a bit of an initially fiddly setup process, they seemed sturdy enough and won't get in the way while you play. The pedals are better than Thrustmaster's previous efforts in this area, but (being the pedantic drivers we are at PowerPlay) we can't bring ourselves to call them perfect. They are nice and weighty, and come with a pleasingly large footrest, but Thrustmaster have

In the old days Thrustmaster made the best. Now their gear is merely above average

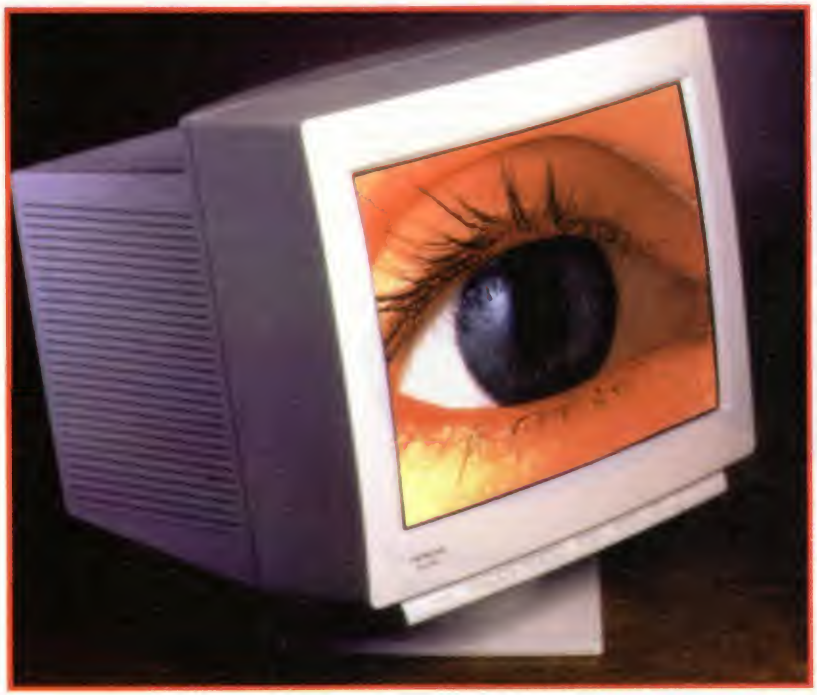
MICRA DIGITAL
Head To Head Games Connection Kit

Networking, even under Windows '95, can be a confusing task if you aren't that familiar with all the ins and outs of the often annoying and arcane setup process - and even for those that consider themselves to be fairly knowledgeable, purchasing the necessary hardware and installing the software is often a bit of a hit and miss affair. Micra Digital have struck upon a pretty good idea, we reckon, and it's something that will be very useful to many gamers. They've put together a kit that contains all you'll need to get started at network gaming and file sharing. The Head To Head Connection Kit contains two ISA or PCI Plug-and-Play NE2000 compatible network cards, two terminators for BNC connections, the necessary software installation diskettes, and 5 metres worth of UTP (unshielded twisted pair) cable. There's no need to be scared off by the acronyms though, what you get in the kit are two network cards, installation software, and the necessary cables. Simple! And the instructions provided are clear, precise, and make the whole process easy, too. The whole kit comes with a twelve month warranty, and though it might work out to be a couple of dollars more expensive than purchasing the components separately, the advantage in having everything in one box ready to go far outweighs the possible savings, we reckon. The ISA kit goes for a recommended retail price of $89.95, while the PCI kit will set you back $99.95.

More information from **Micra Digital on 9482 7777**

Network that spare PC! Talk a chum into visiting for a games weekend!

HITACHI
19 inches of Japanese joy



In the days before today, owners of your regulation 15" monitor aspired to own a 17" beast. The next step up was the 21" monitor, but the massive price jump quite simply ruled out anything bigger than a 17" gameviewer. No longer, for the 19" monitor is becoming commonplace.

19" is perfect for gaming. Standard 640 X 480 SVGA won't break up and look chunky, which is what happens with a 21" monitor. 19" monitors, while not cheap, do inhabit the range of affordability... Depending on your current score in the rat race. They also take up much less desk space then the Big 21" beast - a major consideration.

As the intelligent and attractive readers that bought the PC PowerPlay Hot Hardware Guide would know, we recently discovered the joys of the Sony Trinitron 20" 300sf. It's big 'n' sexy with a stunning image quality. Most impressively though, it only demanded a small amount of desktop space - the screen itself is huge, but the rest of the monitor isn't much bigger than your regulation 17 incher. As the same readers would also know, we thought the image quality of the Hitachi 21 incher was very impressive, but the thing was simply unfeasibly huge.

Hitachi have seen the light. They probably read our criticism and went full-swing into panic mode. Probably. End result is that Hitachi have a new monitor which is just perfect for gamers. The 19" CM751 boasts a maximum resolution of 1,600 X 1,200 at 75Hz refresh, and can do 1024 X 768 at a truly amazing 115Hz.

The CM751 retails for a recommended **$2,660** - a good grand and a half cheaper than the Sony. While the Sony has a flatter screen and is more compact - and is, well, a Sony, the Hitachi offers serious competition. Consider too, that the big dollars you're spending are an investment in a bit of gear that'll probably outlast every other component in your gaming PC.

ATi Xpert@Play
2D/3D Video Card

Those blessed with a decent short-ish term memory will remember the Ati Xpert@Work video card from last months Hotware section. Well, ATi have an eye on the gamers market as well, and they've got another similar card just for us type of people. Actually, it's very similar to the Xpert@Work. So similar that cynical people might think that it's actually the same card, and they wouldn't be far wrong either. It's got ATi's 3D Rage Pro 3D accelerator, which isn't the cream of the crop for 3D acceleration but still isn't terrible, either 4MB or 8Mb of RAM on board. The only difference, apart from the different software package bundled with the card, is in the addition of a TV out port for the Xpert@Play, so you can hook up your TV either through an S-Video or composite connection and use that for display as well as your monitor. So, as with the Xpert@Work, while it's not a hard core high level 2D/3D card, it's a decent compromise, and at **$450** might just suit your needs as well as your bank account. More details from **BBF Components on (03) 9761 4299**

SOUND BLASTER
Live PCI Sound Card

Sound Blaster have the *name* worldwide for sound cards, when most people think of PC sound, they think of Sound Blaster. Creative Labs have recently announced their next generation sound card, entitled the 'Sound Blaster Live', and as you may have guessed from the title of this piece, it's going to be a PCI card. Cool new features include a new E-mu chip called the EMU10K1 (from a wholly owned subsidiary of Creative Labs), which will feature 64 voices - 32 hardware and 32 software as with the AWE 64 range. The specs of this new E-mu ship do look quite impressive though, the chip will be able to treat all 64 channels as separate channels, which means that it will be possible for applications to stream .wav files, wavetable MIDI synthesis, as well as any other audio source. Also, the sound samples will be converted to play back at a 48kHz sample rate with 20-bit revision. For non-technically minded people, this means that no matter what sound you're playing, it'll sound bloody great. Other than that, big news about the SB Live is that it doesn't look like it will support Aureal's A3D algorithm for 3D audio, instead Creative are banking on using their own (unnamed) technology, for positional 3D audio, though there will definitely be support for Microsoft's DirectSound and DirectSound 3D. On top of this, Creative have also integrated a 'rear surround sound' output port on the card, and word is that their newly acquired Cambridge Soundworks speakers will be releasing a system to take advantage of this feature when the card is released. Good news for audiophiles and gamers alike! Full product review as soon as they send us one...

CREATIVE

THRUSTMASTER
RAGE 3D control pad

PHOTO: SCOTT WAJON

Being a Thrusty, it looks weird, but that same parentage bestows winning usability

There comes a time when you need a control pad. Whether you're playing one of the many increasingly bearable console-ported fighting games, bouncing along in a side-scrolling platformer or using it in the PC PowerPlay recommended mode - playing FIFA 98, a control pad is now indispensable.

Here's a new one. Thrustmaster already have their Phazor pad, which is a flattering copy of the Sony Playstation pad, albeit larger and with greater quantities of rubber. Now they're copying the Sega Saturn design with their new Rage 3D. We're pleased about this, the Saturn pad (we're talking about the excellent second generation Saturn pad, not the unpleasant Gravis Grip-style job) is an excellent design.

Being a Thrustmaster product, the Rage takes scientifically proven concepts and weirds them out ever so slightly, so that the end result is unlike anything else. The best thing about the Rage is the way it can lie flat on the desk, operating much like a flat arcade machine panel. Very comfortable it is in this mode, thanks largely to the big, free moving D-pad. It's more of a loosely gambolled sphere that a conventional pad. We PC gamers don't have the beefy and over-developed thumb muscles of our console brothers, so the Thrustmaster design is welcome and comfortable.

Holding the pad in hand while playing feels awkward in comparison. The design seems to be of the "looks great on the CAD/CAM screen, OK boys, hit the Manufacture switch" school of thought. It's no catastrophic travesty of design though, it's just a whole lot better flat on the desk.

The ability to daisy-chain up to 4 Rage pads is nice, but is also expected with all new control pads. It just shows Thrustmaster is paying attention again, as always.

The **R.R.P. is $109.95**, available where you buy your games.

Diamond Multimedia's 'Shotgun' Technology

Diamond Multimedia have recently announced their new modem technology, designed to bypass the inherent problems (mostly monetarily related, in Australia's case) with ISDN. Dubbed the 'Shotgun', Diamond's new modem is really two analog modems working concurrently, both operating at a maximum of 56Kbps. Any modems will be able to be used with the Shotgun, though Diamond will be releasing their own brand modems which will, apparently, make the best use of the system.

There are a couple of problem areas with this rather cool technology though - the first is the 56k standard, with Diamond choosing Rockwell's 'k56 Flex' standard rather than 3Com's 'x2'. Also, the Shotgun has been produced in partnership with Access Communications, and for the Shotgun to work the ISP must be using Ascend products, which isn't always the case. On the plus side, however, there are some impressive technological advantages to the system. Both phone lines can be used to maximise data throughput, but if there is no need for the second line to be utilised it will automatically shut down, and there is also the possibility for the second line to disconnect 'on the fly' for incoming voice or fax calls (though as to whether this will work with Australia's phone systems is still not confirmed). ISDN speeds without the exorbitant cost? Maybe...

AMD and Anvil join forces

AMD have been around making processor chips for quite a while, but thus far they haven't managed to make much of an inroad into Intel's near monopoly of the market. We've told you about their whizz-bang new chip that's on its way, the AMD-K6 3D here and in other sections of the mag, but there's some new news. Digital Anvil, who are at present creating the Wing Commander movie under the leadership of Chris Roberts, have announced that they have entered into an alliance with AMD. What the alliance all boils down to at present is that Digital Anvil will incorporate AMD-3D optimised versions of all their games in the future, and AMD can start singing about how much industry support they are receiving. But there's more than just a PR exercise behind the move, AMD's new chipset might well take on and beat Intel at its own game, and deservedly so. The chip uses a relatively new instruction set, which enables the processor to accelerate MPEG-2 graphics and Dolby AC-3 digital sound on the processor itself. So it looks like it might be a big year for AMD, and with their 'close ties' to Microsoft, they look as if they might have the backing to make serious inroads into the Intel hegemony.

AMD

Digital Anvil

MATROX m3D

3D upgrade for fast game play

Incredible value!

Matrox m3D takes you to the outer limits of 3D gaming. Combining high-speed 30 frames/second game play with support for up to 1024 x 768 resolution, Matrox m3D gives you the edge you need to truly enjoy today's 3D games. What's more, two hot new 3D games and over 20 3D game demos are included right in the box, making it the most cost-effective, full-featured 3D upgrade for your PC.

HOW IT WORKS

Matrox m3D works as a companion upgrade to your existing 2 MB (or more) VGA card. All you have to do is insert it into an available PCI slot in your PCI or AGP system. It's also specially optimized for the Matrox Mystique and Millennium series, and it works with the Matrox Rainbow Runner Studio video editing module. Minimum system requirement is Pentium 133 MHz or compatible. Does not work with Matrox Impression Plus or earlier versions of Matrox graphics cards

matrox

BUNDLED 3D GAMES INCLUDE:

HEXEN II

ULTIMATE RACE

20 GAME DEMOS

TOMB RAIDER

MOTO RACER

and more!

Australian Distributor
Focal Point Computing Pty Ltd
Melbourne: (03) 9525 1144
Sydney: (02) 9925 0388

MULTIPLAY

– A Journey into the Inner Sanctum

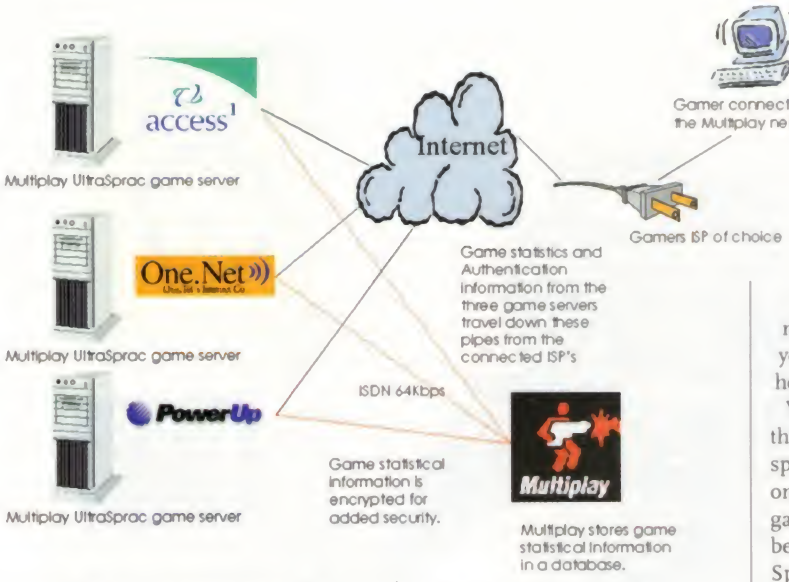
Garry Wallis visited Multiplay's Sydney HQ to learn about the technology behind the magic.

All gamers know that nothing compares with actually playing games against other humans players. Games like Quake II have very intelligent computer controlled opponents that can duck and generally behave more life real-like. Human players on the other hand employ very complex patterns of play and can generally be very unpredictable. The human brain is considerably more complex than an AI algorithm in a game. This is what is drawing the masses of gamers to the online multiplayer experience. There are a few ways to experience multiplayer gaming. The most obvious is the "dial your mate with your modem" routine, but this is very limited, allowing only two of you to play at a time. You could create a LAN and then you could play against a lot more players, but this requires a bit of network knowledge to get it up and running. The easiest way to play multiplayer games is over the Internet. The Internet is a network that doesn't need much technical knowledge, the only real problems Internet play has is the fact that there can be latency and packet loss problems. That is why dedicated games networks have started emerging which can offer reduced latency problems by introducing dedicated game servers and special client software.

(Above left to right) David Urquhart, Richard Sandlant, Anthony Scott & Laura Peck.
(Below) A fisheye view of Multiplay at work

Multiplay away

At the Quake II/Heavy gear launch I met a great chap called David Urquhart who happened to be the CEO of one such Internet gaming company. He invited me to take a visit down to their head offices located deep in the heart of Sydney. This I definitely wouldn't miss! So I accepted his generous offer. I always love checking out cool computer hardware, especially that which is games related. I was met by one of the good chaps at Multiplay known as Nick, who graciously gave me a guided tour of the offices and a technical overview of their wonderful gaming heaven. What made the first good impression on me was the fact that Multiplay are different from the tons of other online gaming networks out there. Most



other online game networks require the user to dial them directly. If you already have an account with an ISP, as most of us do, then they will require you pay for an additional dialup account when you join with their gaming network, which seems a tad silly. Multiplay, on the other hand, has another strategy. Multiplay is ISP independent, meaning if you are connected through any ISP to the Internet you can play on Multiplay. All you need to do to play is to get the Multiplay TEN client software and an account with Multiplay and away you go.

I'll have TEN... Thanks

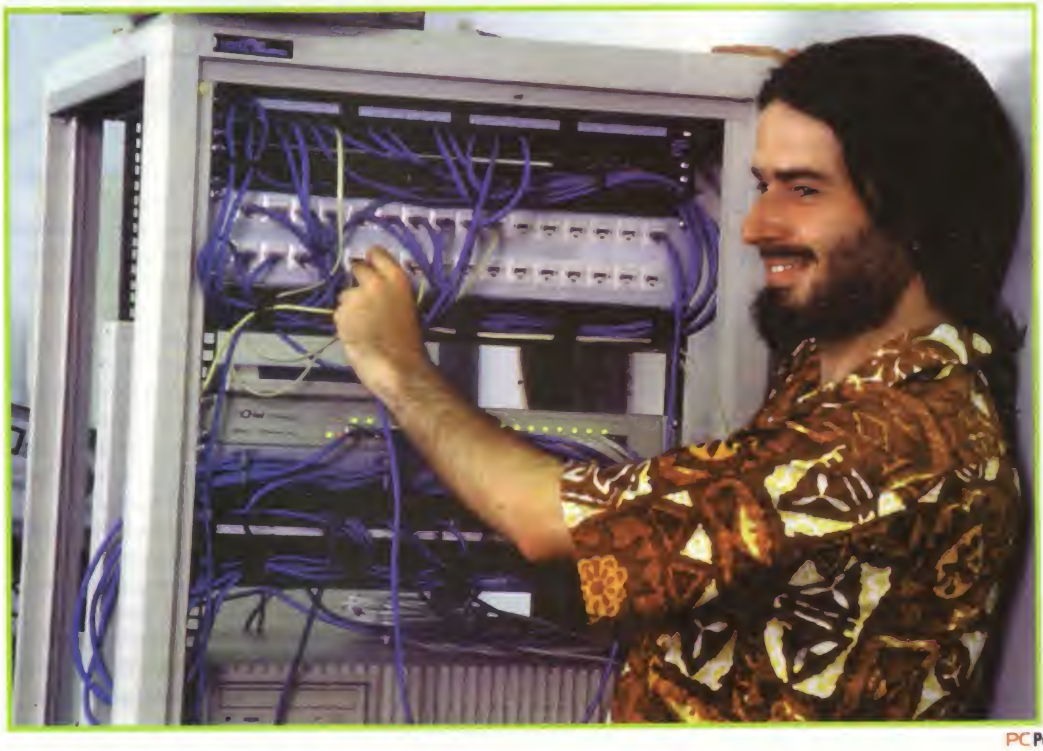
Most of you would know of TEN, if you don't then where have you been hiding? TEN, or Total Entertainment Network are extremely big over there on the other side of the planet. A great guy called Vinod Khosla originally founded TEN in 1995 and it has grown dramatically since then. TEN certainly is an excellent games network, one look at their Internet site (www.ten.net) will assure you of this. They have a massive array of games under their belt and are only getting better. The best thing about Multiplay is the fact that they have the privilege of being associated with TEN. Which means that Multiplay get to use an Australian modified version of the rock solid TEN software to perform their games magic.

Multiplay at play

This software has a proven track record in America and is frequently updated with great new features. The Australian version of the software is slowly catching up with TEN in America, Multiplay hope to keep the versions close as possible in the future. The TEN Multiplay software is not responsible for connecting you to the Internet, this is left up to the end user. When you dial into your preferred ISP to get a connection, instead of launching your browser software as normal, run the Multiplay TEN software. When the Multiplay TEN software starts up it will ask you for your online screen name and your password for authentication.

When a connection is made with the Multiplay network, if your software needs upgrading, it will automatically download and update your TEN client software, cool hey?

What is exciting is the fact that the TEN client software has a special feature that others can only try to imitate. During games, actual player statistics are being recorded for later gloating. Special versions of the games executable have been created to hook into the game and record this information about your games playing experiences. For example, during a Quake deathmatch Multiplay will store information regarding how many kills you have made, even down to individual weapon statistics.



Some people would have it no other way. Those that aren't interested in statistics in the slightest can opt for no statistic zones to play in instead. When a user on the Multiplay network spawns a game, it is quite feasible for this game to continue for days. Because the games gets created dynamically, players can jump in and out of games at will until the game ends or creator decides the game should end. This would be great for games that require masses of hours to complete like role-playing games. Just imagine a network game of Heavy Gear where the game could continue until there is an overall victor. Which could mean days of heated intense battle where the players need only stop playing to sleep?

Latency and our friend Mr. Bandwidth

Earlier I mentioned that Latency and Packet loss are the prime reasons for bad gameplay over the Internet. For a detailed explanation of latency and packet loss check out the Idiot Box section. The Multiplay Ten software has another indispensable feature that will try to sort out these latency and packet loss problems for you.

Mr Bandwidth, as the little alien is known, is your personal performance monitor. When he first appears he will perform a general health check on

(left) Patrick Gray checking latency across the Australian Internet. (below) Nick Harland patching in Multiplay's third server farm

(right) Michael Dean, Unix Systems Manager monitoring the secure systems at Multiplay

your current connection and inform you of all the zones that you are capable of playing in and will rank them in order of performance. Once you have selected your desired zone, you can jump in to any current games in progress, or simply just chat with the people playing. Once you become a member of Multiplay you are automatically given an email address which helps in getting those all important rumbles underway. You can also simply ask people nicely to play via the chat window.

LET'S TALK HARDWARE

The Multiplay office I visited doesn't actually host any of the game servers themselves. These offices are the central brains of the whole operation. All administrative tasks are done here, like recording information regarding players statistics and authenticating users logging onto the network. So where are the games servers actually located? Well, this is the clever part, as Multiplay has three dedicated connections to the Internet through three ISP's. One to Access One, another to PowerUp in Brisbane and the last is to OneNet. Multiplay has an ISDN connection to each of these ISP's. This is also where the game servers are located. When you have been authenticated and connect to Multiplay, you will play games on one of these three game servers. Check out the diagram in figure.2 to see the overall picture of the setup at Multiplay.

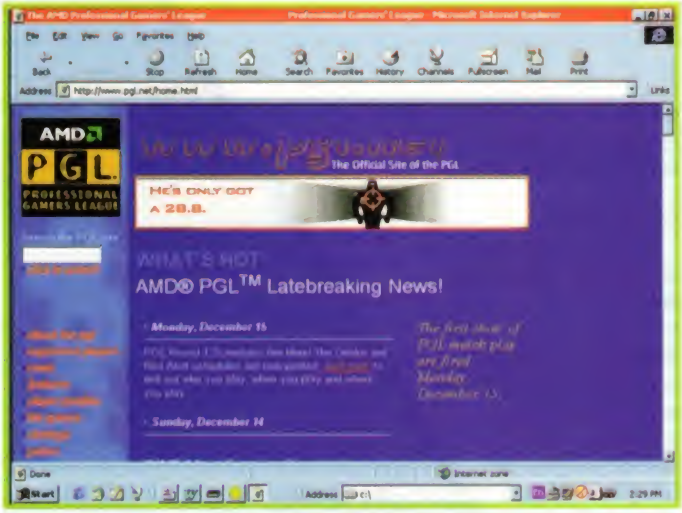
You maybe wondering whether the game servers can handle the pace, let me assure you they can. They happen to be Sun UltraSparc Workstations. Check out the fact sheet about the UltraSparc machines for a drool worthy line up of hardware.

Sun UltraSparc may not mean much to some of you, but listen when I say these things are damn FAST. They are extremely quick machines, they have to be to ensure the best quality gaming experience for everyone. Multiplay is even looking into faster machines for the future to really push Internet gaming to new heights.

The most interesting aspect of Multiplay's set up is that they aren't restricted by the user's Internet connection method for their network. Multiplay allows for any connection method, as it is all handled by your ISP. Some Multiplay users are already coming in on cable modems and experiencing very fast connection times. Another bonus is realised with this method, as Multiplay don't have to deal with ISP related issues and can spending more time making the games network something special. Which I might add is certainly the case with the Multiplay team.

Sun Ultra 2 workstation specifications

CPU	UltraSparc-I from 167 - 200MHz UltraSparc-II at 300MHz (extremely fast!)
Memory	128MB - 2GB ECC 6ons 576bit bus width (damn huge!)
Storage	273 GB total disk space using 20MB/sec SCSI
Graphics card	Creator 3D OpenGL card



(TOP) WWW.MULTIPLAY.COM.AU, MULTIPLAY'S WEB SITE. (MIDDLE) WWW.PGL.NET, PROFESSIONAL GAMERS LEAGUE WEB SITE. (RIGHT) WWW.TEN.NET, TOTAL ENTERTAINMENT NETWORKS WEB SITE. (BELOW) MULTIPLAY TEN LOGIN SCREEN

PGL World Tour

AMD have certainly come through with the goods in America. AMD has introduced a Professional Gamers League. How would you like to be a professional gamer? You can't make a living from playing games... can you? Will prize money in the region of US$250,000 change your mind. Yeah, thought so. This is incredibly exciting, as Multiplay hope to start an Australian PGL, I certainly hope that PGL comes to Australia. Maybe we will even see PGL world championships in the future.

The Future at Multiplay

Multiplay is continuously improving the gaming experience for their users. They are currently adding an awesome line up of games, including Shadow Warrior, Total Annihilation, and GLQuake to name just a few. There will be a constant stream of new games added to the Multiplay network in 1998 with the addition of Quake II and others. Multiplay is also planning to implement a feature already in use at TEN in America called MadCam. This will allow gamers to experience a game of Quake from a camera's perspective, meaning they have no player interaction within the Quake universe. This allows you to witness your friend's character explode into flames as a rocket hits them at very close range. There are also plans for a JAVA version of the Multiplay TEN client that will allow any platform to play on the Multiplay network. Web masters could also embed the Multiplay client software directly in web pages for extremely easy access for everyone.

IDIOT BOX

the simple version for simple folk

What is Latency?

Latency is the time it takes for a computer to send a signal and be received at the other end. The Internet as a network is such that it is very hard to determine how your signals will get to their destination - if at all. When talking to a computer in the US for example, your signal will travel down many cable runs and through many routers even before it gets across the ocean. This invariably increases the time it takes for your signal to reach its destination. creating other problems. Like packet loss, which is caused by over-stressed routers and bad line conditions. There is a greater chance of a packet going missing the more routers your signals has to travel through. This is obviously very bad, and it could mean the difference between you being blown apart by a grenade or toasting your friend with your rocket launcher. How do you know if your connection is good enough to play games on? Well, you can use a feature of the TCP/IP protocol suite and use a DOS command called Ping. Ping will do just what it name suggests, it will bounce a signal off the destination computer and record the time it takes to get back. This is your latency time in milliseconds. A latency time greater than around 300 ms will cause serious problems when playing games. You can give it a test by connecting to your ISP and trying to Ping some different sites. Start your ISP connection as normal, and instead of starting your browser or online game software go to a DOS prompt. To do this go to the start menu, then select programs and click on the MS-DOS prompt icon. At the DOS prompt type "Ping Syd.Multiplay.com.au" or the name of the site you would like to test (i.e. If in Melbourne type "Ping Mel.Multiplay.com.au" in Brisbane type "Ping Bris.Multiplay.com.au").

What is Packet Loss, and for that matter, what's a packet?

A packet is a unit of information that is sent over a network. When data is sent over the Internet, the data is not sent in a continuous stream but is broken up into smaller manageable chunks. This is done to facilitate easier error checking and to reduce lost information. When a packet is sent, the receiver must acknowledge the sent packet before another is sent. In this way packets can be resent if they haven't reached their destination. The re-sending of packets when they are lost is a major cause of headaches when playing games over the Internet. The reason most packets are lost is because your signal has to traverse too many routers, or Hops as they are known as to get to their destination. A DOS application called Tracert is used to trace a route. What it does is inform you of how many routers (Hops) your signal has gone through and the time it took. If your signal has to travel to more than 10 hops then you will most certainly experience problems when playing games. To test your current route to Multiplay or anywhere for that matter. Go to a DOS prompt like we opened before and type "Tracert Syd.Multiplay.com.au" or "Tracert Mel.Multiplay.com.au" or "Tracert Bris.Multiplay.com.au" depending on where you are located.

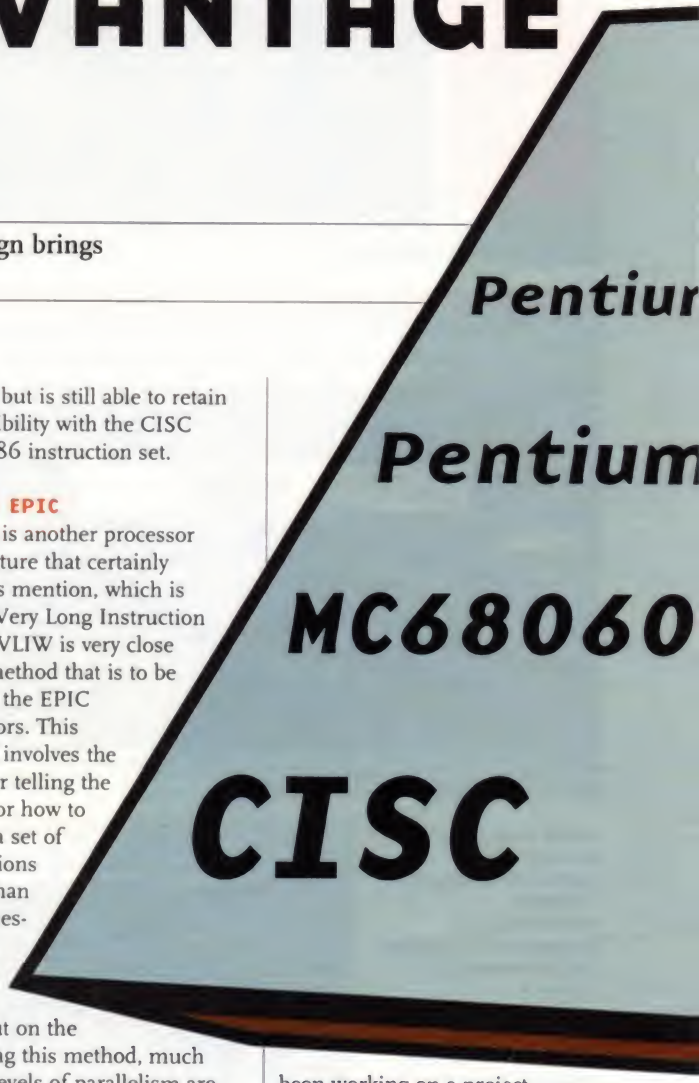
Router

A router is a way for information to get to its destination. If a signal is sent down a cable and you wanted the next computer that sees it to push it in the right direction, you would use a router. Routers can come in all sizes, some routers will route a lot quicker and more efficient than others. When the router can't cope with the load it will start to discard information to keep up. This can often lead to your data needed to be resent causing massive delays.

An EPIC Advantage in Gaming

RISC and CISC are doomed CPU technologies, Intel's new EPIC design brings Supercomputer-power to the gaming desktop.

Garry Wallis



In the beginning...

There used to be only two sides to the debate over microprocessor architecture. These two were: CISC (Complex Instruction Set Computing) and RISC (Reduced Instruction Set Computing). Now there is to be a third viable option, when Intel officially release their next generation processor, code named Merced, sometime in 1999. The Merced CPU will utilize a 64bit Instruction set architecture, dubbed the IA-64 (Instruction Architecture), which will supersede the existing IA-32 instructions used in x86 based processors. What makes the IA-64 instruction set so unique is the fact that it will employ a totally new architecture, which is not RISC or CISC, but EPIC (Explicitly Parallel Instruction Computing).

What's RISC and CISC anyway?

The great RISC V's CISC debate has been raging since the dawn of CPU time. The Complex Instruction Set Computing supporters believe that the CPU should have dedicated instructions for performing complex operations. While the Reduced Instruction Set Computing supporters believe that the processor shouldn't have these complex instructions, and instead outfit their processors with a simplistic instruction set, and rely on software to create complex instructions by stringing multiple smaller instructions together.

So which offers the best performance? That is a difficult question, as the line between CISC and RISC processors is very vague. Processors that were considered to be CISC, like the x86 CPU's, have borrowed a lot of enhancements from their RISC cousins, and the same goes for current RISC processors, which have started to include more complex instructions.

The major performance advantage that RISC processors had over CISC processors at one stage has all but disappeared. RISC processors have a reduced complexity because of their simplified instruction set, allowing RISC processors to achieve very high clock speeds. Digital Equipment Corp's Alpha RISC processor, for example, is available at clock speeds far higher than any of Intel's current x86 based processors. Although Intel's current processor, the Pentium II, will certainly be able achieve speeds very close to that of the highly clocked RISC processors. Intel has made this possible by using many of the tricks employed in current RISC processor designs. These tricks include branch prediction, out of order execution, register renaming, to name just a few, this allows Intel to push their chips to very high clock rates for a CISC based processor.

There are two other CPU's that can really be considered as sort of hybrid CISC/RISC processors. These are the NexGen 5x86 and the AMD K6 family of processors. What makes these processors different is the fact that they have been designed to execute x86 CISC instructions, but internally they convert these into smaller RISC size instructions called RISC86 operations. In doing this these processors can employ all of the performance giving RISC architecture enhancements that provide the RISC processor with their high speeds, but is still able to retain compatibility with the CISC based x86 instruction set.

VLIW - EPIC

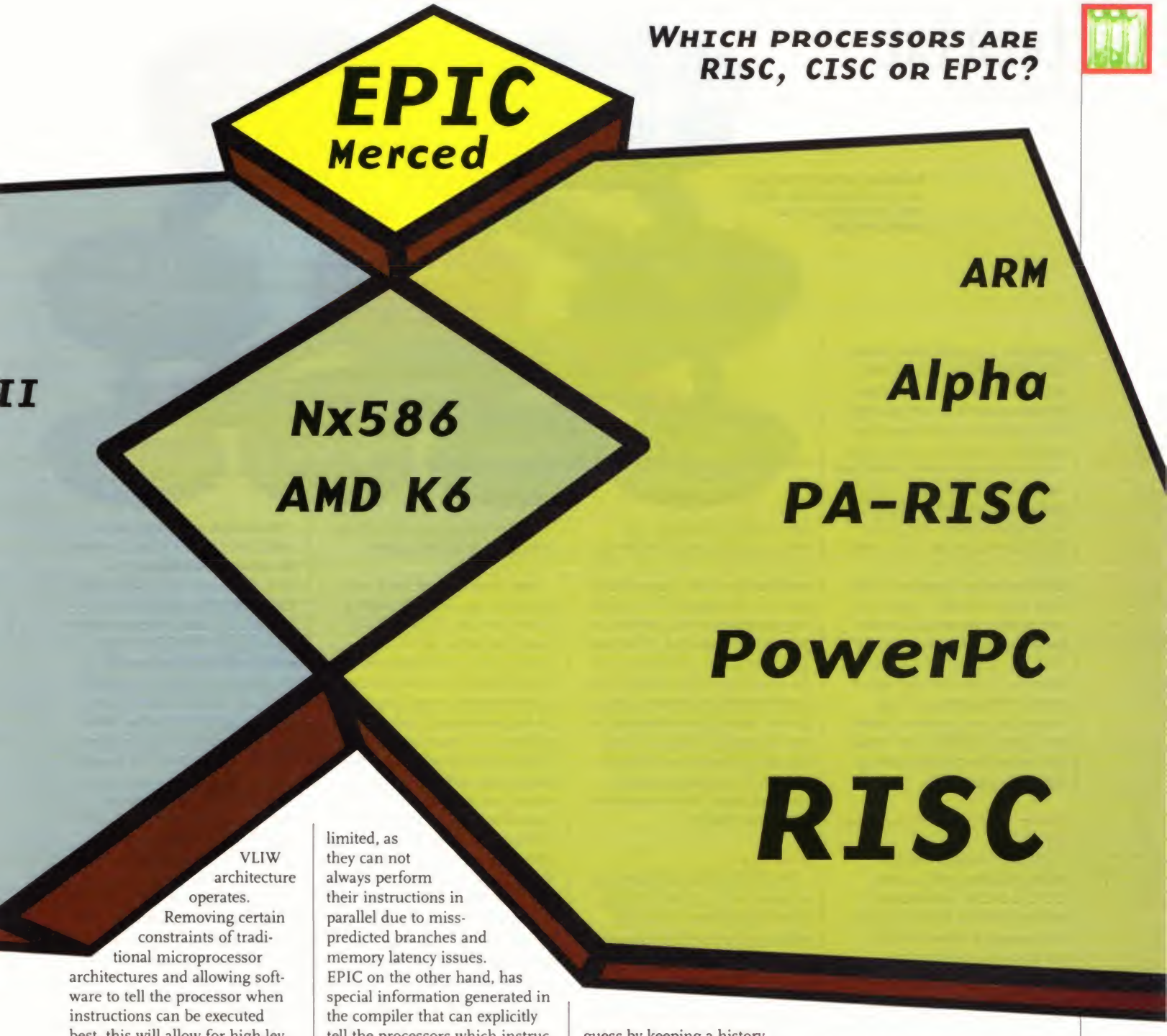
There is another processor architecture that certainly deserves mention, which is VLIW (Very Long Instruction Word). VLIW is very close to the method that is to be used by the EPIC processors. This method involves the compiler telling the processor how to handle a set of instructions rather than the processor having to figuring it out on the fly. Using this method, much higher levels of parallelism are achievable within the processor. Up until recently the compilers needed to achieve the VLIW architecture where not available or were extremely complex. Intel's Merced processor will change all that with the EPIC architecture.

Explicitly Parallel Instruction Computing

Intel and Hewlett Packard have been working on a project together now since June of 1994. Actual information about the project has been a well guarded secret, until now. Intel and HP announced their plans for the future of their processors at this years Microprocessor forum. Their future CPU's will be based around a new architectural standard for processors known as EPIC. EPIC, like I said before, is related closely to the way the

AMD K6 (both CISC & RISC)

68060 (CISC)



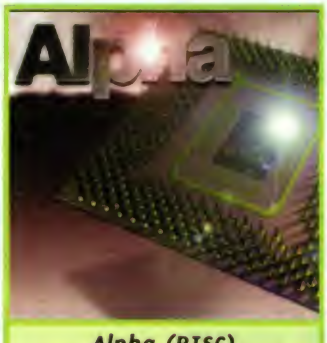
VLIW architecture operates. Removing certain constraints of traditional microprocessor architectures and allowing software to tell the processor when instructions can be executed best, this will allow for high levels of parallel execution. The current microprocessors based on the CISC or RISC architectures can also perform multiple instructions at once, so what makes EPIC and the IA-64 architecture so special? Well, current RISC and CISC processors are limited, as they can not always perform their instructions in parallel due to miss-predicted branches and memory latency issues. EPIC on the other hand, has special information generated in the compiler that can explicitly tell the processors which instructions it can execute in parallel, or when a memory access is required.

TO PREDICATE OR PREDICT

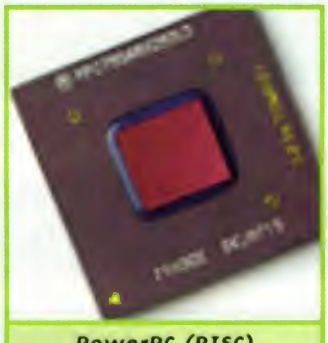
The current method of dealing with branches in a program in RISC and CISC processors is to guess by keeping a history table that allows them to predict the way the branch may go.

A branch instruction is a point in a program where the processor needs to make a decision. For example, in a game when the processor needs to know if the fire button is pressed, the two eventualities here are fire button is pressed and fire button is not pressed. In this situation, the processor has to guess which instruction sequence to load and can and does guess wrongly. This method then leads to miss predictions and although the

Nx586 (both CISC & RISC)



Alpha (RISC)



PowerPC (RISC)

Pentium II (CISC)

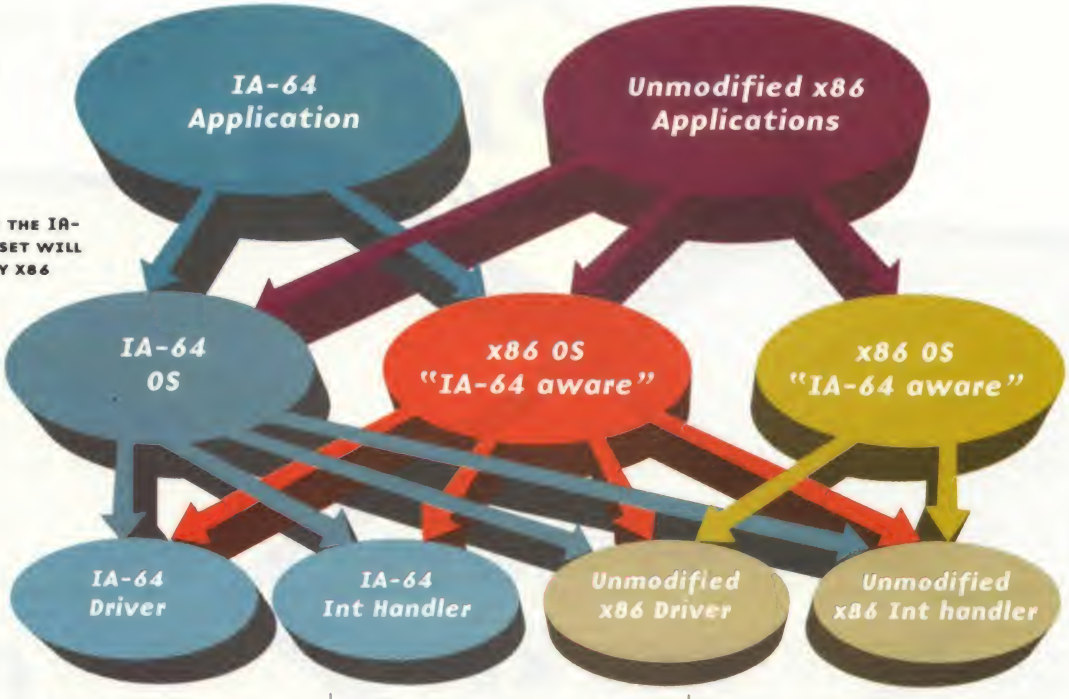


DIAGRAM OF HOW THE IA-64 INSTRUCTION SET WILL DEAL WITH LEGACY X86 APPLICATIONS

processor may only miss predict 10% of branches encountered, this still results in a significant performance hit. A ten percent miss prediction result may not sound very much, but the actual overall processor speed reduction can be as much as a 30 - 40% performance hit when executing some applications. The IA-64 EPIC instruction set uses a very different method that has no miss prediction penalties at all! How does it do this I hear you cry? It just executes all instructions regardless. The processor then will just discard the instructions that it has executed that it doesn't need anymore. This means that the processor never has to stop and flush its instruction caches for taking a wrong branch in a program.

HURRY UP I HAVEN'T GOT ALL DAY

Memory latency is another major problem with current CISC and RISC architectures. Memory latency is what occurs in a processor when the CPU has to wait for an instruction that requires a read or write to memory or cache. For example, an instruction that has to make a direct write to memory may incur a latency period while the processor has to wait until it can perform the write. This waiting practice of current CPU's means the processor cannot perform at peak performance all of the time. EPIC allows the compiler to tell the processor to get ready for an instruction that accesses memory well before the instruction is due to execute. This will mean that the processor never has to wait for the memory access to initialize before the instructions can be completed.

MERCED P7

The IA-64 instruction set is to be used in the up and coming Merced processor from Intel, which will be the first processor to use the EPIC architecture. The IA-64 instruction set will offer as much as four times as many useable processor registers than typical RISC processors, thus eliminating the need for register renaming logic.

Exact details about the Merced processor are still being kept a secret for now. What we have been told is that the IA-64 instruction set will allow for instructions to be grouped into 128bit bundles containing three IA-64 instructions and special template information (see fig.1). This special template information is what tells the processor which instructions have special needs for parallel execution or memory accesses. These bundles then are joined to form instruction groups, which can be of any size. The Merced Processor will also be able to execute IA-32 x86 instructions natively (see fig.2) but you will only see massive performance advancements when executing native IA-64 instructions.

Instruction groups are what really gives the EPIC architecture its amazing scalability. One EPIC processor may only execute three instructions in parallel (1 bundle) at a time, where a higher performance EPIC CPU may execute up to 12 instructions (4 bundles) in parallel. This faster processor would be able to execute the code of the other EPIC processor without any changes to the actual code itself. So theoretically EPIC processors could be released that can execute any number of instructions in parallel and would still be able run older EPIC program code! Once the IA-64 EPIC processors hits the mainstream, desktop PC's will have an awesome amount of processing power at their disposal which 10 years ago would have been considered to be in the high end Supercomputing league.

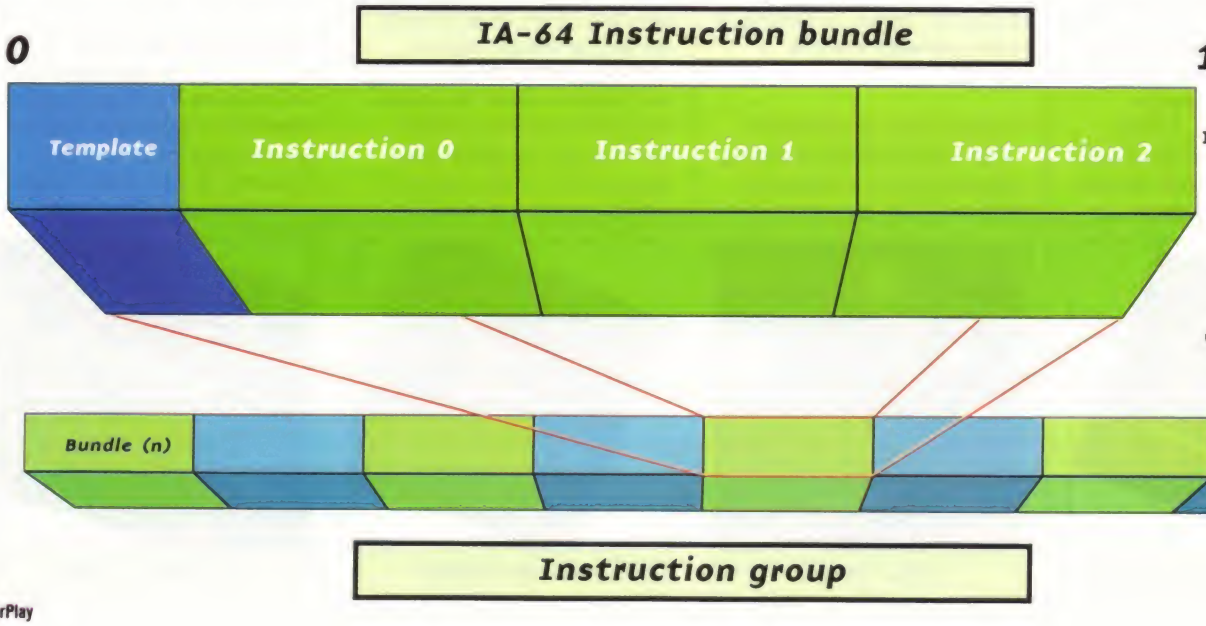


DIAGRAM OF INSTRUCTION BUNDLE AND INSTRUCTION GROUP USED BY THE IA-64 INSTRUCTION SET. EXACT DETAILS OF SIZE AND CONTENTS OF INSTRUCTION WORDS IS STILL UNDER TIGHT WRAPS AT INTEL & HP

LATEST GAME SPECIALS

Blade Runner

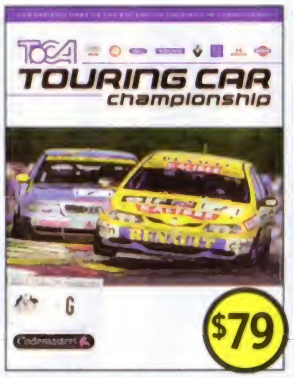
F1 Racing Simulation

G-Police

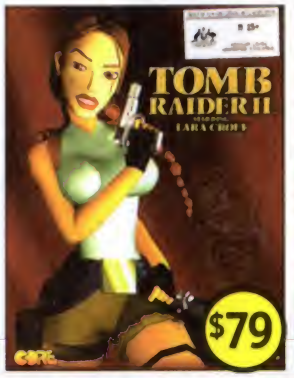
Heavy Gear

Lords of Magic

Pro Pilot

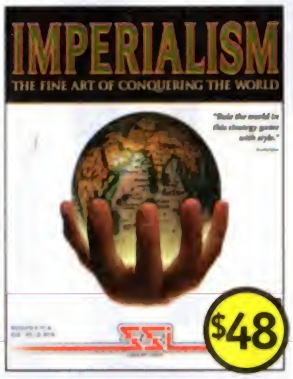


TOCA Touring Car



Tomb Raider 2

Wing Commander Prophecy



Imperialism

On Special... *(Available while stocks last)* – *Red Alert Add On* - Aftermath – **$28**
• Links LS 97 – **$39** • Deadlock – **$19** • Road Rash – **$28** • Monster Truck Madness – **$29**
• Virtual Pool 2 – **$64** • FIFA 98 – **$79** • SimTower – **$29** • Sim City 2000 SE – **$48**
• Capitalism Plus – **$49** • SuperKarts – **$19** • MAX – **$29** • Shattered Steel – **$29**
• Carmageddon – **$48** • Grand Theft Auto – **$79** • FIFA 97 – **$48** • Comanche 3 – **$48**
• Destruction Derby 2 – **$28** • Discworld 2 – **$28** • Hoyles Solitaire – **$20** • RAMA – **$28**
• Lords of the Realm 2 – **$48** • Warcraft 2 – **$48** • Phantasmagoria 2 – **$49** • 3D Ultra Pinball Lost Continent – **$59** • **Cant find what you want here? Then call us on the number below for all your PC entertainment needs.** Please Note: all prices exclude delivery. Prices subject to change without notice

Order Hotline: Phone (02) 9929 3933 • Fax (02) 9929 3533

Title	Quantity	Price
Add $8.00 for Delivery		$8.00
	TOTAL	

Name: .....

Address .....

.....Postcode: .....

Tel: (Bus).....(Home).....

Cheque/ money order • Please debit my card $ .....

❑ Bankcard ❑ MasterCard ❑ VISA ❑ American Express

Card No. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Signature .....Expiry Date.....

Software 4 You

6/385-389 Pacific Hwy Crows Nest 2065
Tel (02) 9929 3933 Fax (02) 9929 3533
software4u@alpha.net.au

THE PC POWERPLAY

DARK REIGN

STRATEGY GUIDE

JERE LAWRENCE

PART 2: THE IMPERIUM

Last issue we showed you how to kick butt the Freedom Guard way. This time around it's the Imperium that gets the PC PowerPlay Really Big Once Over. As with last month, we're skipping the first 3 missions because they're so easy a Playstation owner could finish them. Go hard Reigners!

IMPERIUM MISSIONS

Mission 3. Prison Break

Objectives:

Repair the damaged compound and hold off any diversionary counter-attacks.

Track down and kill the escaped prisoners.

Scout out potential escape routes for the convoy carrying Commander Radec.

Destroy the convoy.

Start the mission by building a water launchpad for the water spring in the lower right hand corner of your base as controlling and harvesting two water springs REALLY helps in this mission.

Continue using a scouting unit to observe out all entrances into the enemy base and to see the other water spring just above the northeast corner of your base perimeter.

Prisoners will be running around at the beginning of the mission but don't bother chasing them around. Instead, let them go. Fortify yourself first. When you're more built up, send in about 5 infantry in a transport and destroy the water launchpad and 3 power plants o the upper-left hand corner of the map.

When you are building up your force for the final attack send some runners and plasma tanks to the right of your base to secure it and then build some plasma turrets across the path incase the convoy gets past your attacking units on your final assault. Do the Same for the left side except have your construction rigs in a Invader Troop Transport. Have your attacking units cross the river and take out the prisoners, then build the Plasma Turrets.

When ready, place a sizable force to the left of the enemy base and invade with another force from the left. This will cause the convoy will plow right into your other force!

Mission 6. Infiltration on Malik

Objectives:

Protect the Hover Research Facility.

Destroy the stolen technology by eliminating all Freedom Guard forces.

Make sure you upgrade your HQ and Assembly Plant ASAP so you can build Tachyon Tanks then destroy all 3 bridges going to the hover facility with Plasma Tanks. Once all three bridges are gone, the FG cannot get to your island as they are not using hover technology in this mission.

When destroying the last bridge, move your infantry off the island and have them attack the bridge from the mainland (so they are not trapped on the island when the bridge is gone). Once all three bridges are gone, you don't have to worry about that island any more (while you are doing this, you should of course be building more Bions and Plasma Tanks).

The FG will launch their first attack very quickly sending some units in spurts, but you can just divert all your units away from the bridge to the attacking units until they are destroyed, then back to attacking the bridge again).

With a bit of breathing room, build defenses (Plasma Turrets) around your base to the east and west and lots of Tachion Tanks with which to attack the FG base to your east.

Secure the top of your island with 2 or 3 Plasma Turrets to protect the Hover Station as keep a couple units near to fire at those out of range. Continue by securing the eastern side of your southern base with 2 Plasma Turrets and a couple of units.

Position 4 Plasma Tanks at the NW of your base along with some other units to take out sporadic attacks.

Destroy the two Laser Turrets on the eastern side of your base (they are blocking the bridge). Then send a Hover Freighter down through the opening by the bridge to the south of the map and set a path for him around the fringes of the screen all the way to the east and then up to the north (to the Water Spring in the NE quadrant).

With that done, once you have good cash flow build up a small force and take over the FG base in the SE corner and destroy the bridge at the top. Take the Water Spring in the top right corner of the map and on the small island to the southeast.

Mission 7. Subterfuge

Objectives:

Use your infiltrators to steal plans for Freedom Guard units and structures, then form a Freedom Guard attack force.

Sabotage the treaty conference by destroying the city before time runs out.

Start the mission by placing your infiltrators in the middle of the forest where the wreck is. Group your Infiltrator units so you can morph them all at once and note that you do not have to steal the plans for any enemy units. Only for structures! Take the water to the west of your base.

Important note: If ALL your Infiltrators are inside something (such as your Transport) the mission will end in failure. [Appears to be a BUG in the game].

If you pose as an enemy unit too long (in a morphed state), they will figure out that you are their enemy and will attack you.

When you're reedy to use the Infiltrators, only steal one plan at a time, return to your HQ then repeat as necessary. Start by stealing the plans for the Assembly Plant by infiltrating the enemy HQ building. Once you have those plans you can build the FG Assembly Plant and create FG units! Next steal the repair Station, Training Facility, Heavy Rail Platform Hospital, and a Phasing Facility.

The best way to steal the plans is to keep your Invader near by while you infiltrate their base. Once you have the enemy plans and eject your Infiltrator(s) from the building, load them into the Invader and run back to your base.

Complete the mission by invading with triple rails tanks and Skirmishers.

Quick Tips

- Use your Invader to spot an enemy infantry unit, and morph the Infiltrators into it. Make the Invader run away quickly before it gets damaged.
- If you eject your own Infiltrator he will not morph back into himself. If he gets ejected by the enemy detection system, then he will unmorph!
- Keep one of your Infiltrators back at your base while you send 3 with the transport.

Mission 8. The Desiccator

Objectives:

Move the Dessicator to the rendezvous point.

Rebuild a base and eliminate the Freedom Guard presence.

Start the mission by take out the 3 FG water plants. Then take over the one below your base and use it. Place plenty of defences around the aquired launchpad, and guard it well with units behind the turrets. Tachion tanks work best for assualts but guardians and exterminators will also work well. Create a strong artillery presence as well.

Make sure that you build at least two assembly plants (the FG has three) and build up a combination of tachion and scarab units. This

FG base defence is very strong, so try to take it out first.

Quick Tips:
•The FG base is located in the upper east corner of the map.

A handfull of infantry polishes off the enemy base

Mission 11. Last Stand

Objectives:

Kill Radec by destroying all Field Hospitals.

Eliminate remaining Freedom Guard resistance.

Use the Rift Creator.

If you haven't played as Freedom Guard yet, you haven't learnt the joy of the shockwave unit. Do not attack an enemy shockwave from your base or from in front of it. Instead, take any fast ground unit, run around it and attack it from the back. This is important because it will shoot at its attacker, and if said unit is in front of your base, the wave will continue to your base.

Alternatively, try and get the shockwave to fire at your unit towards the enemy base. If successful, not only does the computer look stupid, but it does a lot of damage.

You need artillery quickly. When starting, build a Headquarters, Power plant, Water launchpad, Assembly Plant and a Training Facility. Upgrade quickly so you get artillery. Meanwhile build more power plans, put 2 neutron accelerators by the NW entrance, 2 near the SE entrance and use Bions to keep out enemy incursions from the middle north.

You will need 10 artillery pieces ASAP. Target the artillery in the middle of the NW road as far as your neutron accelerators can see. Build some more artillery, then split all artillery into 2 groups. Target each group on the NW road and spread out slightly. This will keep ALL units, including the shock tanks, out of your base.

With a bit more room to breathe, build 2 more neutron accelerators near the North Middle entrance. This will keep everything else out. Continue by building another Assembly Plant, A rift, rearming pad, and whatever else you need for your assault.

Use outriders in big groups to go north and eliminate the RED team. Get the NW corner first and take out the hospitals and water launchpads. Head SE and Destroy more hospitals and water. Scout for more hospitals and kill them. Don't kill BLUE buildings unless you have to, when ALL hospitals are gone, the BLUE team will change sides and help you!

Mission 12. Death Blow

Objectives :

Eliminate all Freedom Guard units and buildings.

Start the mission by building Cyclones early and use them to patrol just outside your defense for shockwaves. If you get 'waved' early, you might as well restart the mission.

Until you've taken out FG air platforms, cover any Tachion advances with your Cyclones (FG Outrider/Sky Bike swarms). As early in as possible, also try to take the water on the left of your base. It's guarded by 1 Heavy rail platform and 1 Air defense site. Destroy these and build a bridge over the water or use hover transports.

Try and ultimately remove the FG air presence so you can hunt and kill and shockwaves moving around. As this is a destroy all units mission, keep going until you succeed.

Quick Tips:
•The FG will attack in waves. Plan for a balanced air/ground defense.
•Build at least 2 Assembly Plants early in the mission.

Mission 13 for both sides - The Togran Mission (No name)

Objectives:

Protect the orbital defense matrix.

Destroy all Imperium and Freedom Guard forces.

When you start this mission, your base is going to get absolutely SLAMMED! The enemy owns all the water springs on the map, however, you do start with 500,000 credits. It may seem like a lot, but you can run short on cash if you aren't careful.

Take the top water source ASAP, it is poorly defended and once secured is rarely attacked. Then build POWER stations and a mixture of Towers (Both FG and Imperium) with Imperium anti-air directly behind. The best defence is two lines of towers on the north and west of your base. To complete your defence make Hellstorm Artillery. About 20 is perfect.

Time your attacks when the enemy is at it's weakest, the best form to use is an advance troop of either air or armour. The idea is not for them to fully engage but run past (a few times should do it) and allow the artillery to pound the buildings.

DON'T BE GREEDY. Take out One or two buildings only. Then fall back and repair (have at least two repair stations handy). To destroy the Imperium base, Attack the bottom and work through it. After the bottom left corner is yours, place artillery, as they then have access to all buildings.

Repair a lot and slowly and methodically destroy the Imperium base. Take the 2 extra water sources and defend them with the same amount of defence as you have at your base because the FG attacks will be very powerful.

Build about 20-30 Sky Fortress's and send them over to just below the island with the monolith. Send a few Construction Rigs to the top left corner of the map. Then let your base get attacked, and attack theirs with your sky fortress's until they're destroyed.

Make a large perimeter surrounding Togra's lab just south of the FG. Shell the middle and avenues of approach with Artillery. Take 15 Sky Fortress's and 10 mobile AA and go northwest taking out the FG water depot. Follow the water down to the Imperium's base. Do hit and runs with your Sky Fortress's so they can recharge and take out both of their HQs and a few Assembly Plants.

Weakened like that, Victory is yours.

Jere Lawrence

VIRUS

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR SYSTEM?

VIRUS

- Virus is different on every computer system it is played on - Your data determines the look & feel of the game
- Hear your WAV files & see graphic files as you navigate through them
- Real time 3D engine running under Windows95 at over 25 frames per second
- Build up resources, send spies, place cameras, & maneuver around your system with total freedom

YET TO BE CLASSIFIED BY OFFICE OF FILM & LITERATURE

available now on PC CD-ROM

© 1997 Kiddum Multimedia © 1997 Telstar Electronic Studios L.t.d

ROADSHOW INTERACTIVE

www.interactive.village.com.au

TELSTAR

THE WORLD IS A PERFECT PLACE, BECAUSE NOW YOU CAN

PLAY GAMES FOR FUN & PROFIT

Is the reason you work just so you can fuel your gaming habits? Do you feel work is a hobby and games are your true life? Would you kill and maim to get a job where playing games could get you loads of cash? Well now you can and the only thing you have to able to kill is, well, everyone.

The Cyberathletic Professional League (CPL) is run by a team of dedicated gamers who want to see the world's best given the credit they deserve. The way this happens is that the CPL gets sponsorships from corporate giants with lots of money to throw around for players who have signed a CPL contract. No, no, no it's not World Series Cricket part 2, they aren't changing the rules, chances are that almost all of the cool tournaments this year and beyond will be at least CPL Endorsed so you wont be missing any of the action. The CPL is not a small tin pot organisation either, if you look at some of the sponsors, like Activision and Logitech you really can't go wrong. The CPL is just what the gaming community needed, we have a new direction.

You might think that this is all well and good but how could it affect us in Australia since all the major events are in the US? Well it would seem that just about all tournaments from now on will be Cyberathletic Endorsed. This means that even though it is not a CPL event there will be CPL talent scouts hanging around looking at the local produce, if you're good enough, you could see yourself being whisked away to the US earning six figure pay packets. That isn't small change.

Angle L. Munoz is the driving force behind the CPL, it is he, along with a few other game heads and business types which have helped make the CPL a reality, I spoke to him about the CPL and beyond.

PCPP: Who's idea was the CPL and why did you start it?

Angel: The Cyberathletic Professional League, or CPL, was something that had been on my mind for a long time, the catalyst that launched the concept into reality was my interactions in last June with several of the top Quake players in the U.S. Red Annihilation took place at E3 with a Ferrari as a grand prize, and all of the sudden the entire industry was electrified, while others were still talking about creating a league I started the Cyberathlete Organization by signing one year contracts with some of the best Quake players around.

The reason was simple: to bring the focus to the game player and not just the game or the game company. I felt that the gamer gets sort of lost in the game media hyperbole and it is he who ultimately finances the entire industry through his purchases. At the Cyberathlete Organization there are no hidden agendas or marketing schemes, the entire organization is motivated by the following principles:

1. The promotion of computer game playing as an international sport.
2. The quest of bringing broad media attention and sponsorship to the cyberathletes.

PCPP: What has the reaction been like from the online games community so far?

Angel: The online games community's reaction has been pretty wild. All very positive and encouraging. A good example occurred at The FRAG (a tournament we sponsored in the last weekend of October) we posted a simple message on The FRAG website that anyone that would like to help us set up to please show up early the day before the tournament. I was shocked at the incredible number of people that showed up and how hard they worked to not only to set up but also they all worked during the entire event to make sure the first cyberathletic tournament would run without a glitch. I am still in total awe of how the entire games community has embraced the concept and how great their support has been of all of our efforts. And beyond that some of the top game companies have also provided us with enormous support: on the top of my list are: Ritual Entertainment, ION Storm, id Software, WizardWorks/GT Interactive, Activision and Quantum Axcess. A few hardware companies have also supported our efforts: SAS Bazooka, Logitech, ACT Labs, Micron Technology and others. It really is amazing how many people believe in our

IT'S A DIFFERENT GAME

NSA/MUL040

www.multiplay.com.au

concept and are wiling to help us develop it to the fullest potential.

PCPP: What sort of qualifications are required to play in the CPL and which games are being supported?

Angel: Right now the only game that is being supported is Quake and the games that are in the pipeline for us are not even released yet! Games like: Sin, Daikatana and Quake II. At the Cyberathlete Organization we believe that spectators make the sport and all of these games are so fast paced and action packed that it will make spectating these tournaments entertaining and engaging.

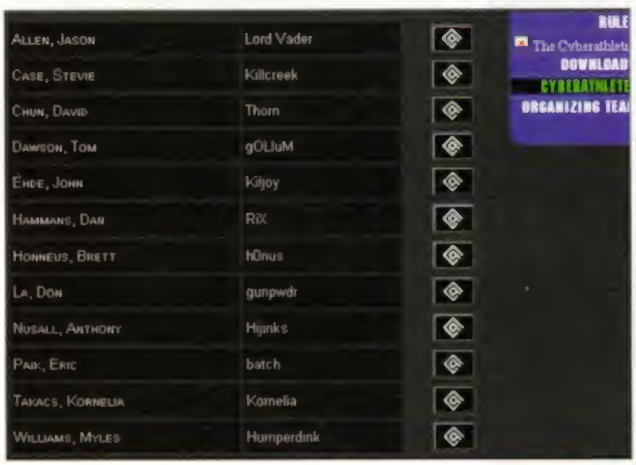
PCPP: Depending on how good you are what sort of windfall could you expect to get from competing?

Angel: All of the current cyberathletes receive a monthly compensation from the Cyberathlete Organisation, and we actively seek sponsorships for all of them. Several have been contracted for ads and several more have received compensation for just appearing at an event. Finally, the ultimate source of potential income is at the CPL tournaments which will have cash prizes for the winners. The goal is to have the top cyberathletes receive yearly compensations in the several hundreds of thousands.

PCPP: For the non professional there is the CAL, what's the main differences?

Angel: Well, the Cyberathletic Amateur League has been slowly transforming into what we call CETs or Cyberathletic Endorsed Tournaments. Organisers of these tournaments agree to strictly follow the cyberathletic rules of tournament, to have a member of the cyberathletic organising team at their tournament and to use our proprietary ranking system. In return we will endorse the event as a cyberathletic event, help them in media exposure and use the results of the tournaments in our overall ranking system. This gives the amateur players an opportunity to rank in our system and maybe to qualify as a professional player.

"I felt that the gamer gets sort of lost in the game media hyperbole and it is he who ultimately finances the entire industry"



PCPP: At the moment the events are only in north America, what chance is there that you will branch out into other territories such as Australia?

Angel: Big chances. Interesting that the first country we heard from was Australia. Several people have contacted us that want to organise tournaments that may qualify as CETs. We should be announcing final agreements in the next few months.

PCPP: What have you got coming up in the next few months and where do you see the future of the CPL/CET?

Angel: Well we have not officially announced this, but we have some big plans for 1998 that will include several huge CPL tournaments and some household name sponsors for our tournaments. More details will be announced in the next few weeks.

Rod Campbell

So, do it!

To check out other cool stuff to do with the CPL (including the FAQ, Bio's of the Organisers themselves, as well as the athletes), checkout the CPL website. Located at www.cyberathlete.com it is well thought out and contains just about everything you would want to know. Check it out.

WHEN YOU PLAY IT ON THE NET

TOTAL ENTERTAINMENT NETWORK
Multiplay

AND WE'LL GIVE YOU SEVEN DAYS FREE TO PROVE IT

PICK UP THE PHONE NOW & FREECALL 1800 359 200
QUAKE, DUKE NUKEM, SHADOW WARRIOR, RED ALERT, DARK REIGN, TOTAL ANNIHILATION AND MUCH MORE

THE DIFFERENCE IS MULTIPLAY

>q>a SETUP with Ashton Mills

LIFE AND GAMES, THE TWO ARE SYNONOMOUS

Setup
PC PowerPlay
78 Renwick st.
Redfern
NSW 2016
setup@pcpowerplay.next.com.au

WHEN YOU WRITE, REMEMBER TO INCLUDE AS MUCH PERTINENT INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE. SEND YOUR CONFIG.SYS AND AUTOEXEC.BAT AND ANY ASSOCIATED *.INI FILES FOR WINDOWS THAT MIGHT TELL ME MORE ABOUT YOUR PROBLEM. GIVE ME AS DETAILED AN EXPLANATION AS YOU CAN AND BE SURE TO INCLUDE AS MUCH DETAIL AS POSSIBLE ABOUT YOUR PC. FEEL FREE TO EMAIL YOUR QUESTIONS OR, IF YOU WANT TO SNAIL MAIL, PLEASE REMEMBER TO WRITE CLEARLY OR BETTER STILL, PRINT YOUR LETTERS. PLEASE NOTE THAT DUE TO THE VOLUME OF MESSAGES WE RECEIVE, WE CANNOT GUARANTEE A RESPONSE TO YOUR QUERIES.

GOING DOTTY?

>q My Computer is a Pentium 166-MMX with 32Mb RAM and two hard drives : 1.7Gb and 1.3Gb. My system performance is okay, but what I'm having trouble with is the tiny dots that appear on my screen when I'm in Windows 95. Those dots do not appear in my DOS and games sessions though only in windows. I've got my display settings to 16 bit-High colour at 800x600. But if I set my settings to 32 bit-True colour, those dots do not appear. I've got a 14 inch monitor and a 2Mb video card. Would the problem be with my monitor or my video card? Please help.

Cruz Gucio Von Putten

>a It's most likely your video card. You haven't mentioned a brand name, but I think it's safe to assume that getting the latest drivers is your best bet. If you still run into problems you might want to contact technical support.

CHANGING THE PROGRAM LIST

>q Lately I have had this slight problem with Window 95, is there any chance you can help me? What happened was that my niece installed a game into the computer under Win 95. After the installation, Win 95 added the name of the program into the ADD/REMOVE PROGRAM bit. After playing the game for a few hours, she got bored and deleted the program by clicking on MY COMPUTER and dragging the whole directory that the game was stored in and throwing it into the recycle bin, and then she emptied it. Now, the name of the game is still in ADD/REMOVE PROGRAM and I can't seem to get rid of it. Is there a way to fix that problem besides reinstalling Windows 95?

Thanh Nguyen

>a Yes there is, you can use a handy tool such as PowerToys or WinHacker. Both these programs provide a whole suite of feature enhancements, not the least of which allows you to edit the list of programs installed. You can find both at http://tucows.hunter.net.au/.

INCOMPATIBLE HARDWARE

>q Setup has helped me a lot and I haven't been able to write in because most of my questions have already been answered. Guess what, I've got a problem! I am experiencing a lot of freezing, crashing and slow downs (games mainly) with my machine. I've got a Cyrix686 (PR200), 16Mb EDO RAM, 2Mb Diamond Stealth 3DPRO 2000 video, Sound Blaster PRO/16 and a TX motherboard with 512k of L2 cache. I think the processor really sucks, I had it recommended to me, but I reckon the guy must have been on drugs. Anyway here's some questions I'd like to ask:

1. I can't get Red Alert to work in Win95 yet it worked on my old 486 with 8Mb RAM. It just freezes during the black screen at start-up. Can you please tell me what could be causing this?

2. When I install Microsoft DirectX 5 everything goes haywire and freezes/crashes, do you have a clue?

3. I constantly experience windows program errors but I don't have enough cash to get a program such as RAMGATE, could you suggest a cheaper/free alternative?

Thanks. I would be pleased, no, overjoyed if you could print this and answer my questions in your mag.

There's also copies of all my important files and config files.

Dylan.

>a Thanks for sending the disk! Excellent idea. Onto your probs:

1. I'd say Red Alert isn't able to do what it wants to do with your machine, most likely a side effect of your next problem...

2. If DX5 won't install properly it means you have hardware in your machine that is incompatible with DX5. If DX5 won't install, then games like Red Alert running under Windows that require DirectX also

DIRECTX 5. SOURCE OF ALL THINGS FUN

won't work. DX5 is a major change over DX3 and some hardware that works with DX3 doesn't properly work (until new drivers are written) with DX5. You don't need DX5 for the Windows version of Red Alert so try re-installing the more lenient DirectX 3. Bar the very latest games that need DirectX 5, DirectX 3 should work with all your games. Since Red Alert also comes with a DOS version, try running that and see if it works.

3. If you're constantly getting Windows errors, you might not just have incompatible hardware, but perhaps damaged hardware. Given your machine is relatively new (given you have a TX motherboard) I'd say your best bet is to get the latest drivers for all your hardware and make sure Windows has the support it needs. Bad RAM can cause crashes, as can an improperly configured CPU in your motherboard (voltage too low, for example). The Cyrix should be fine, it's a good CPU at a good price — but the settings to support it must be properly set on the motherboard or you will run into problems. Lastly, try adding some wait states to your RAM in your BIOS. Trying to boost your machine by toggling all the speed options in your BIOS can also make it unstable.

Fixing Accton problems

>q I would like to comment on the article printed about Networked Gaming in the latest issue of your magazine. I did notice that you had difficulties in setting up your Accton NE2000 Network cards under Win95. I use both ISA and PCI type cards religiously and have never had any sort of problem. However I did notice that you have to use the "1step" utility, provided on the driver diskette, to make sure that your IRQ's and Memory Addressing are configured correctly. The best combination that I have found is using IRQ 10 and I/O Range = 0300 - 031F. Also make sure that you have set the addressing exactly the same in Windows as In DOS. This can be a step over looked (but I am sure that you didn't). I hope that I might have helped in your quest for Network Gaming.

Thanks for the Article.

Peter Gunstone

>a Thanks for the tip Peter. All Accton NE2000 users take note!

3DFX doesn't work!

>q Hello, please help me... I have just installed a Cardex Dragon 1000 (VooDoo Chipset), I am running it through a Diamond Stealth 2000 (S3 chipset) and using a Samsung SyncMaster 15GLe (monitor). When I try to play games like GLquake, GLhexen2, or Turok 3Dfx version the graph-

How to buy a new PC and win.

I've received quite a few emails and letters recently asking what PC is best to buy, what hardware to choose, which 3D card is better and so on. Rather than respond to individual letters, and rather than repeat myself, I'll write a general answer that everyone can think about if they're in the market for buying some new hardware. This is good advice for anyone looking to buy now or in the future.

First rule of purchasing: You get what you pay for (mostly).

If you have a question like 'Is the $50 Super-Mambo-Breadboard-Dicer 9D 48M Video card better than the $400 McFast video card and should I get it?' well obviously the answer is 'No'. Despite the advances and changes in technology, the better equipment is almost always the more expensive. If one motherboard is $50 more than another, ask yourself why. It's more likely to be more efficient and faster. If one motherboard is only $10 more than another, it's quite possible the cheaper one is better because the difference will be less based around the design and components. In this situation do some research. Ask around, what reports have you heard of people using these motherboards?

Second rule of purchasing: They're out to make money.

Computer shops have a business to run, they make money out of your purchases. It's a fact of life that some shops will sell you something which is, generally, of benefit to them. E.g., trying to convince you to buy X-model rather than the newer Y-model, simply because it's in their stock and they'd like to get rid of it. That said, not all shops operate this way. Yes, some have dodgy salesmen who have no idea what they're talking about and will try and get you to buy what they want you to buy, but some shops actually put customer satisfaction and service above immediate profits in the hope your patronage will pay off in the long run. I've been surprised a number of times by shop owners who are willing to recommend one product over another (sometimes the cheaper one) because they know I'm after the best. Look for people who have as much passion about their PCs as you do, and ask their opinion. Many test the stock they get in and choose the best performers for themselves, but stock other brands because everyone has a preference.

Third rule of purchasing: Stick with brand names.

Every now and then new comers enter the market and take it by storm. Well and good. But there are always many more cheaper less well known brands that never make it big, and they never make it big because they're just not good enough. Not sure which motherboard or video card to buy? Find out what everyone else is using and why. Stick with brand names you recognise. If you do a little shopping around with ads in computer mags you'll quickly realise which brand names are associated with high performance and which names are associated with good prices (and sometimes less performance). Choose what you're after, price or performance, and go looking for the best deal you can for that product.

Fourth rule of purchasing: Ignore the sales pitch.

Just as you can expect no-brainer salesmen to try and promote crappy products for you to buy, so also you should blatantly ignore the sales pitch and so called 'proof' (in the form of graphs etc.) in the adverts you find in magazines. The adverts are designed to sell and they'll paint a picture that puts the product above all others. Obvious hey? So don't take them literally! I'm always surprised by the number of people who say '...but their ad said this...', well of course it did — it's designed to sell, not suggest the best product for your needs!

This rule goes for even the big, trusted, brand names you recognise. Don't ever base a product choice on an advert. Look for benchmark tests in magazines, use word of mouth to see what users think, go chatting on the Net to find out more and remember everyone has an opinion and their favourite brand — so even then take everything with a grain of salt.

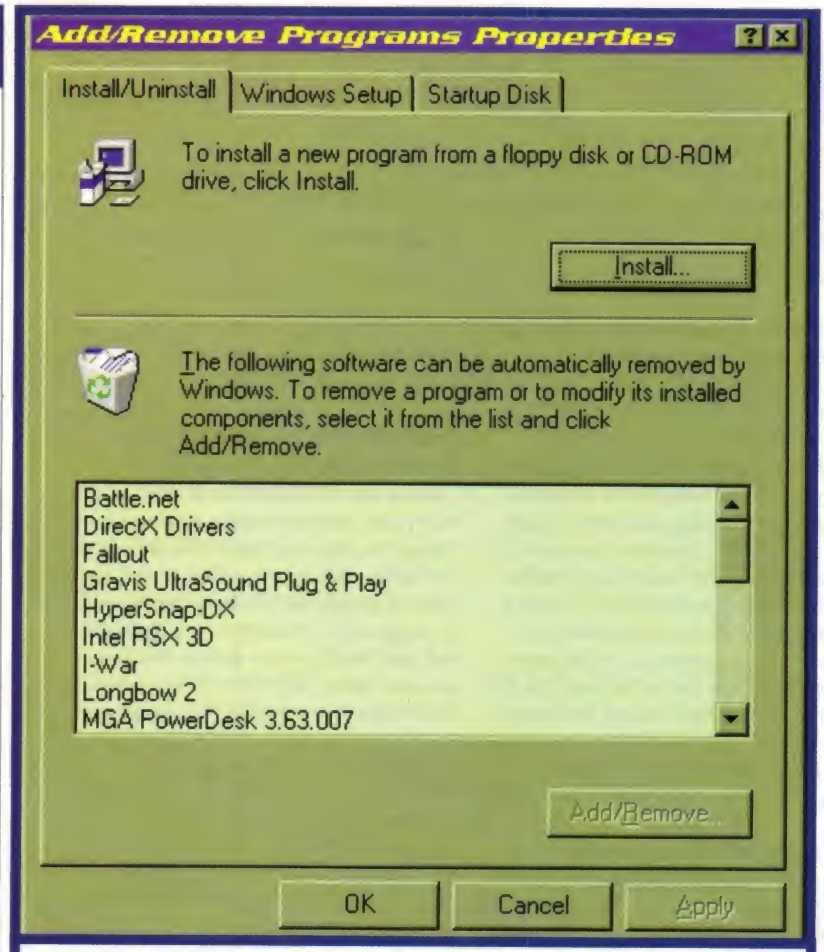
Fifth rule of purchasing: Shop around.

You might draw up a list of pieces that costs $3000 at Carl's Computer Caravan and find the same equipment for $2800 at Dan's Dodgy Deals. Given the hardware pieces are likely to be brand name, they themselves can be considered reliable. What might not be reliable is the warranty or support of the shop where you bought your hardware. Shop around, go for the best price you can afford but DON'T buy from someone you suspect to be dodgy and make sure you check what type of warranty you get. Lastly, make sure once you receive your equipment that it's exactly what you asked and paid for.

So what SHOULD you buy?

I keep getting asked what brands are best, so here's my faves. Going by the rules above this is just my opinion and by no means indicative of the best performance you can get. Look into them if you wish, but there's no guarantee they're the best for you.

Motherboard: SuperMicro, Abit, Asus, Gigabyte
Video: Matrox, Diamond, Tseng
3D: 3DFX, Nvidia
Sound: Diamond, Gravis, Creative
Monitor: Sony, MAG
I/O: Adaptec, Buslogic, DPT
HD: IBM, Quantum, Seagate



THE PROGRAM LIST IS A MAJOR DESIGN FLAW. WHY DOESN'T IT KEEP TRACK OF PROGRAMS?

SETUP continued...

ics freeze as well as the game? I start playing for a few seconds and then it freezes and I have no choice but to reset! Can PC PowerPlay please please help me?

Paul Bocock

>a Paul, you'll read this in your email first, but for the benefit of other S3 users your problem is a documented fault of the co-existence of 3DFX and S3 cards (some hoonga-boonga to do with memory remapping). You can find a fix for it at *http://www.3dfx.com/download/sdk/index.html*

CD HASSLES

>q I'm writing because I have trouble with my CD ROM in DOS, I shut down into DOS and it says:

"No valid CD ROM drivers selected"

I think it has something to do with DOS-Start, this is the way my DOS-Start reads:

"c:\Windows\command\mscdex". Isn't it suppose to have some switches after this?

Please help, I can't play any of your DOS demos, or Descent 2!!

Carole Skinner

>a Yes indeed. MSCDEX needs to know, at the least, which device it's installing CD-ROM support for, and this device is often specified by a line in your CONFIG.SYS that reads something like this:

```
DEVICE=C:\CDROM\GSCDROM.SYS /D:MSCD000 /v
```

In this example of an IDE drive the device is 'MSCD000' (this is generally a safe bet for the CD device name, though it can differ). This same name must be used with MSCDEX in your AUTOEXEC.BAT (or DOSSTART.BAT) as such:

```
C:\CDROM\MSCDEX /D:MSCD000 /m:16
```

Apart from that, you can also force the drive letter you want to give the CD-ROM with /l: and the number of read ahead buffers with /m:.

RAID ON DOWN

>q I was wondering in you're issue 18 November, in Random Access section you talked about RAID (Redundant Array of Inexpensive Disks).

I have a P133 system, with 2 Hard Drives old 428Mb Seagate and a 2gig Western Digital. How do I get this RAID thing to speed up my computer?

Can you tell me step by step.

Thanks...

Mike Bilbe

>a Professional RAID solutions (normally found as options for high end SCSI cards) can handle different size disks to form a RAID. However, if you want to RAID some drives using Mr.BIOS as mentioned in issue 18, then you'll need to get two or more drives of exactly the same size (and same make/model would be helpful too). Also, Mr.BIOS performs its RAID magic with IDE drives, not SCSI, so you if you want to make a RAID with Mr.BIOS be sure to get IDE drives.

Random Access

Welcome to Random Access, a column dedicated to interesting, useful and informative tips about anything and everything to do with your PC. Be it hardware, software, DOS or Windows you'll find tips and tricks listed here every month. If you have some tips of your own you'd like to share with other gamers such as yourself feel free to send your tip into Setup and, if we publish it, we'll be sure to credit and print your name.

REGISTRY REDUCTION

If you're like me you'll jump on any hint or tip that'll improve the speed or performance of your machine. Well, you'll jump on this one for the Windows 95 registry — it has the ability to remove crap from your ever-growing registry and thereby decrease the boot time of Windows 95. Squash thy registry thus:

1) Backup your registry (how to do this has previously been mentioned in RA).
2) Start regedit (Start —> Run —> type regedit —> click OK).
3) Make sure 'My Computer' is selected.
4) Click Registry —> Export and type in a file name such as C:\reg.reg (just to be inventive). Make sure you add the drive and path at the front so you know where it's going.
5) Restart Windows in DOS mode (take note you need DOS 7 for regedit) or 'Exit to DOS' from the Shutdown menu.
6) Change to your Windows directory (normally c:\windows)
7) Type the following commands:

```
attrib -r -a -s -h system.dat
attrib -r -a -s -h user.dat
```

8) Now you can use regedit to rebuild your registry (free of useless junk) by typing:

```
regedit /c c:\reg.reg
```

9) Reboot and take note of smaller, more compact, registry and then pay homage to the glorious magazine you hold in your hands.

REMEMBER TO BACKUP YOUR REGISTRY BEFORE TRYING TO COMPACT IT

Back Issues

$15 each inc. postage and handling. Enquiries: ph: 02 9310 1433, fax: 02 9310 1315, subs@next.com.au

#1 Online fighter combat, Duke 3D, Grand Prix 2, Warcraft 2 playguide.

#2 Kali net games, Earthsiege 2, Zork Nemesis, C&C playguide.

#3 3D graphic accelerators, Settlers 2, Cyberstorm, Zork Nemesis walkthrough.

#4 PC buyers guide, Australian Rugby League, Normality, Spycraft walkthrough.

#5 Net games, Time Commando, Close Combat, Civ 2 strategy guide.

#6 Best and worst games of all time, Quake, Pandora Directive, Flight sim roundup.

#7 Violence in games, Mechwarrior Mercenaries, Krush Kill 'n Destroy, MMX Pentiums

#8 Making of a Game, Video Card feature, C&C Red Alert, Privateer 2.

#9 Red Alert Feature, Alphaworld, Wavetable soundcards, Tomb Raider, Syndicate Wars.

#10 New Star Wars games, 3D accelerators compared, DIY Upgrade guide, Discworld 2

#11 Diablo, Interstate '76, MMX Pentiums examined, Build your own PC and network, Dark Reign.

#12 MDK, Quake Mission Packs, Huge Joystick guide, Internet Newsgroups, Ecstatica 2.

#13 Need for Speed II, X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter, Quake addons, PCs versus Consoles debate, Online game hackers.

#14 Dark Reign, Doom Clones, 16 Modems tested, Derek Smart, Comanche 3, Redneck Rampage.

#15 Carmageddon, E3 Report, Tomb Raider 2 preview, Blood & Sex

#16 Dungeon Keeper, RPG feature, Lands of Lore II preview, Virtual Reality, Last Express playguide

#17 Age of Empires, 500MHz Pentiums, Starfleet Academy, Beam Software, Software Piracy

#18 Jedi Knight, Total Annihilation, Hexen II, Quake addon megaguide

#19 Blade Runner, Tomb Raider 2, AFL '98, 3D CPUs, Quake 2 first look

#20 TOCA Touring Cars, Heavy Gear, FIFA '98, Next-Gen 3D cards, Dark Reign Playguide Pt.I

PC PowerPlay Back Issues

Name _____

Address _____

Suburb/Town _____ Postcode _____

Enclosed is my cheque/money order, or debit my credit card for PC PowerPlay issue(s):

_____

Bankcard ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐

Expiry Date _____

Card No. ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐

Signature _____

HOW TO

- Cut or copy the form and post it with a cheque or money order, or your credit card details, to:
  PC PowerPlay
  Subscriptions
  Reply Paid 634
  78 Renwick St
  Redfern, NSW 2016

- Fax a copy of the completed form, with credit card details, to:
  02 9310 1315

- email your name and address with credit card details to:
  subs@next.com.au

If you're not sure about something, call us on
02 9310 1433
or email subs@next.com.au

? * ORACLE

Random Oracle Quote:
"So, what's your name? Sorry, I missed that, let's just call you ageless, faceless, gender neutral, culturally ambiguous adventure person, or afgancap for short." -Zork Grand Inquisitor

Oracle
PC PowerPlay
78 Renwick St.
Redfern
NSW 2016
setup@pcpowerplay.next.com.au

Can you believe the year has gone by so fast already? I don't, but at least it means that more of those long awaited and elusive games are drawing closer. For now, let's get back to the ol' routine shall we. Come, sit, gather round and drink in the knowledge that the Oracle wishes to impart.

Dungeon Keeper

? I am stuck in Dungeon Keeper and I've only just received the game. Could you please give me all the codes for it.

Ian Taylor
Murry Bridge, S.A.

* Ok Ian, you want cheats, you got them, just follow this system.

How to make the cheats work: Take the creatures you want to sacrifice into the temple and drop them into the temple waters.

Imps = Sacrifice a few of these little guys and they will be much cheaper to create.
Fly & Spider = You will get a Warlock.
2 Beetles = Complete current manufacturing.
2 Flies = Complete current research.
Beetle & Spider = You will get a Dark Mistress.
1 Beetle & 1 Chicken & 1 Troll = You get a Dark Mistress
3 Spiders = You will get a Bile Demon.
Ghost = All your chickens die.
Vampire = All your monsters diseased
2 Bile Demons = All your monsters turn into chickens.
2 Barbarians & 1 Bile Demon = All your monsters turn into chickens.
1 Orc & 1 Bile Demon & 1 Troll = All your monsters turn into chickens.
1 Giant & 1 Vampire = All your monsters turn into chickens.
Horned Reaper = All your monsters turn to be angry.
Dark Mistress & Bile Demon & Troll = You will get a HORNED REAPER.
1 Orc & 1 Bile Demon = You will get a HORNED REAPER.
2 Ghosts & 1 Bile Demon = You will get a HORNED REAPER.

Sam and Max

? In Sam and Max Hit the Road, how on Earth do you find Frog Rock and Gator Golf? Please help me!
P.s. I've attached the wires and the magnifying lens to the binoculars at the revolving tower.

Andrew
Coolum Arach, Qld

* To find Frog Rock, you have to first go to the Mystery Vortex, there talk to Shuv-Ooh! and give him the Mood Ring. He'll give you some advice about Frog Rock and a bottle of Mole Man Powder. Exit this room, go through the curtained entrance and get the fur from the floor of the Yeti attraction. Return to the Ball of Twine (diner) and use the binoculars. Use the wires on the binoculars. Control the speed of the binoculars by clicking the "switch"... When the rock between the two attractions mentioned by Shuv-Ooh! appears, stop the visor spinning. The rock should be Frog Rock - if not, keep tracking around until another rock appears. When you locate Frog Rock, drive over to it.

To get to Gator Golf you need to do this at the carnival. Use the orders on the fire-eater. After talking to the Kushmans, pick up the fur and the bottled severed hand in the hall of oddities. Exit by the rear door. In the Wak-a-Rat stall, get the fishbowl lens. Play Wak-a-Rat, take the prize (a torch) and combine it with the light-bulb. Ask the Cone of Tragedy operator if you can ride the Cone. After doing so, check your inventory. Ask the operator about your lost items - he will issue you with a claim ticket. Go to the Lost and Found tent. On leaving, examine the new item you have been given (the World of Fish magnet).
Next, ride the Tunnel of Love. Use the torch on the walls, and once it has been activated, you can use other items. When you approach the fusebox in the wall, use Max on it. In the tableau, examine the king's beard, and walk through the secret door. Talk to Doug, give him the pecan candy, and he will give you a crowbar to use on Trixie's trailer. Operate the Tunnel reset switch in the left hand wall. Exit Doug's den.
Use the crowbar on the trailer door. Inside, take the costume from the hope chest and examine the score card on the inside of the wardrobe door. It will point the way to the Gator Golf.

Leisure Suit Larry 1

? I am having trouble with Leisure Suit Larry 1. How do you order wine for the Fawn in the hotel honeymoon suite. I've got the number and I can't get to a phone but I don't know what address to order the wine to, and from where to pick the wine up.

Andrew Murray
Merrylands, NSW

* Ahh, Leisure suit Larry, the modern teenagers "playboy behind the shed", instead of ink on paper now, it's pixels on phosphor. Sigh, I feel old. Anyway Andrew, here's your answer. There's one phone that works, and that's the one outside the Convenience Store. So take a cab back there.
Call Ajax Liquors and order WINE. When they ask where you want to have it delivered to, be specific: HONEYMOON SUITE AT THE CASINO HOTEL.

Bioforge

? I'm stuck in Bioforge, I know I sent a question to your before, but I need your help again! I'm at the place with all the alien portals. I managed to crack the keyboard code, but the portal keeps on flash-

ing on and off making it impossible to go through the portal. I tried using all the items, but none of them work.

Neil Ferrero
Edmonton, Qld

Too vague Neil, be more specific in your location. Here's the solution from where I think you are. Hope it helps.

At the dig, kill the small, floating alien and use a healing device on Escher. Now go check out the writing on three walls of the Big Sphere Room reached from the large group of stone blocks. Come back to the dig when you're done, and check out the other room.

You can't kill the alien, but if you beat it up and then give it an opening (you may have to let it hit you) it will run off and do something interesting when you pursue it. Now pry open that cracked sarcophagus door, and solve a small puzzle to get a device to let you do what that alien did. (Make the bottom diamond look like the top one.) With the device in hand, use the tunnel.

At the Phyxx caverns. The central column monitor activates the tubes. Which tube is determined by the sign in the center of the monitor (match it to the sign by the tube).

For now, hit the left, right, and bottom tiles in the monitor to activate the one really useful tube at this point.

Use your gun to give you momentum to put you through the other side of the zero-gravity chamber.

Another no-guns fight. Read the writing on the pillars before you head over to meet him. And watch your step!

Use his toy to get through the force field at the far end of the room. Go ahead, solve the puzzle on the monitor. Need help? Green-Red-Blue-Red-Green-Red-Blue-Green-Blue-Green-Orange-Yellow-Violet-Yellow-Orange-Blue-Yellow-Green-Yellow.

After that amusing conversation, install your new battery, go back to the central tube chamber and activate the other two lower tubes. Now use the control device by the blinking tube. Have fun and eliminate your opposition from afar (the same method won't work twice, though, so you'll need to do a different, obvious thing to dispatch the second).

Raise the sphere. Lower it to crush one marine. Raise the sphere again. Drop your gun, run over and grab the grenade and throw ("fire") it back up the tube.

Now go into the remaining tube to fix the gravity ring. Step on the plates to rotate the blue-edged segments into a single line. Watch out for asteroids. Some plates move more than one segment.

Specifically, plates 2, 4 and 6 move two segments each. Step on these three to align segments 2, 4 and 6, ignoring what they do to the others; then align the others by stepping on plates 1, 3 and 5 as needed.

Head back to receive Dr. Escher's logbook. Read it for the medical security code. Go back down, make sure your shield is on, then take the Big Sphere Room tube up to the surface; head for the Icarus. Run past the Marines; swerve left or right when the dropship fires to elude its missiles.

The Marine near the airlock has the information you need to get in the airlock in his logbook (the new controls are a bit weird; persist).

Go read your identity from the medical monitor in the operating room, using the security code to open up the classified data. Go to the hangar. The battery Gen gave you will activate the Icarus if it's still three-fourths full. Pick up your old one and use it on yourself to swop out Gen's battery, then step over to the nose of the Icarus. Insert Gen's battery and enjoy.

Chronicles of the Sword

Please help, I'm really stuck n the part of Chronicles of the Sword where you have to find Merlin. I've absolutely tried everything and I still can't find him. Can you please tell me how to do this and other things after it.

Jimmy Grozdanouski
Melbourne, Vic.

Ok Jimmy, here's how to do it and some other things after it. From the beginning of the game, talk to Lancelot. Wander through all rooms in the castle to get acquainted with surroundings and locations. Sometimes an item can be seen from more than one location - if you cant interact with it from one - you may be able from another (for instance a well in Tintagel).

While you do you must find a candle from candlestick in the dining room with fireplace. Light the candle using it on fire in fireplace. Also pick up a lantern from throne room and use it on your candle to make up a lit lantern. At Wilf's stables (Wilf is a man who sits on the barrel) take a scoop and a bucket. At smith's pick up a horseshoe. Go into tower's door (the one with ivy growing to the right of it).

There click on the torch - this opens grate. Use lantern on darkness and then enter cove. Pick up mushroom. There is a hotspot in the water (to the left of the board above water) - click on it to get a skull. Use scoop on skull to get rubies from it. Go further into cove. Get a dagger and a cup from altar and then return to the place where you pulled torch. Ascend stairs and use sword on seahorse's eye (precisely).

A wall will slide so you con proceed to Merlin's room. Try taking his items and he will appear. Talk with him. He will give you a scroll. Go to the guarded door to Morgana's rooms (from smith its left and upstairs). Talk to guard. Then go back to castle and go right - there is a tankard under table. Go to smith's and fill it with ale from one of barrels. Also give rubies to smith and then you will be able to get a helmet from the table (if there is no helmet on the table do it later when you will need it).

Return to guard and give him tankard. Enter door. Talk to King Arthur. Give him scroll. Return to Merlin, talk with him, go to King Arthur and talk with him too. Now go back to the place where you gave a

scroll to King Arthur (pick up a helmet by the way as I mentioned above).
Pick up scroll. Use helmet on door. Enter door. Talk with Morgana. Give her a scroll. After cutscenes and talking to Merlin return to Morgana's room and get a vial of dragon's blood from table. Now go and talk with Wilf, Lancelot and King Arthur (one of this talks triggers events so you can leave Camelot after it). Return to the guard which you gave a tankard of ale and talk with him - he will return tankard.
Go to the place where the guard of the Camelot gates was, exit. Go up. Go left. Use helmet on water. Back to the right. Go up. Use dragon's blood on door. Enter door. Right. Go to water. Use tankard on water. After combat (SET DIFFICULTY TO EASY) return to Merlin and give him tankard.

Animal

I've been playing Animal for a while and I am totally stuck in a number of sections. The first problem is how do I defeat the robot in the gun shop and open the security screen and pick up the wallet. The second problem is how do I get into the creamery and get the bottle of liqueur for the homeless potato. The third problem is how do I use the telephone number that Regina Raison gives you. How do I get the password to get past the guards at the nut barons bar and how do you fix the lift at tuber towers.

Graham Ramsay
Lane Cove, NSW

Sheesh Graham, with that many questions, why do you even bother playing the adventure at all. The Oracle is kind and giving of answers, but there are just too many here. I'll give you the answers, but I think the best advice I can offer is "go play another game".
From tuber towers, use the balloon from the inventory on the sleeping Biscuit then use the knife on the balloon which will wake the sleeping biscuit. Once he is awake select talk to biscuit and then choose any of the Speech programs offered. At the end of the speech sequence the biscuit will leave, leaving the pillow he was sitting on. Take the pillow and exit scene by using the exit icon. Exit the scene to the left in order to return to the lift.
Select use to enter the lift and select lower ground to take you back to the first floor. Use the furthest door again (t60) to take you to the green room. Use the key on the middle door (pepperamis living room) and use the chair to enter the hits system.
Select docklands, pick up the wrench, use hits system select tuber towers. Once you have emerged at tuber towers, pick up the flowers. Use the door to tuber towers. You are now in the scene with a sleeping pimento doorman, find the exit point to the bottom left of the Screen near the doorman to take you up close to the Sleeping pimento. Pick up the note in the cubby hole behind the pimento and exit the screen to the right.
Pick up the invitation tucked behind the phone (use the phone dial 291 0690). Exit using the exit icon on the floor to the left Of the telephone. You will now appear in front of the telephone, attack the bouncers, attack the dustbin to knock it over look at the litter to see the crowbar, pick up the crowbar, exit the scene to the bottom left, exit to the left of this scene.
Pick up the nutcracker hammer, (attack the biscuit for a laugh) and exit right to the night club front door. (*You're on your own here*) - To enter the gunshop, use the door and respond to terminutters question by selecting invitation. Use the alarm button once in the gunshop, select either response, use the flowers on terminutter, pick up steel toe cap after terminutter dies, use the steel toe cap from inventory on glass twice, pick up the blunderbuss from within the cabinet, exit the scene by the bottom, exit external gunshop scene by the right hand exit.

King's Quest 6

I have been playing King's Quest 6 for a long time and have got into the Castle of the Crown using the "Magic Paint Spell". I have given the boy the hankie and been in the secret passage and given the dagger to Cassimma. Then went into the Treasure room. I went to Jollio and gave him the blue lamp. He's left to get the real one. I can't however get past Captain Saladin when the wedding music starts. What do I do?

Ben Adamczyk
Kuttabul, Qld.

Thanks Ben, a nice easy one, you documented your problem well! Leave Jollo's room and go into the middle room of the dungeon's cells, find a little boy ghost who misses his mother. Give the handkerchief to the ghost, and learn of a secret room by the suit of armor down the hall. Go to the suit of armor and pull its right arm, triggering a secret door. Enter, and watch the guards through a hole in the wall, note the half of password to open a door. Go upstairs and looks through another hole in the wall for a romantic scene with Cassima. Give her the dagger from the Winged One in the Catacombs.
Proceed down the hall to the next hole in the wall, look in it to see the vizier writing a letter to a colleague describing his treachery to Cassima and her family. At the end of the hall is another secret door which leads into the vizier's bedroom. Open a black box on the table which contains a document with the second half of the password for the treasure room in the basement. Close the box and unlock the chest with the skeleton key. Take the incriminating letter written by the vizier. Return to the basement through the secret passage. Speak the password (A-L-I-Z-E-B-U) to the treasure room door, and it opens, revealing a table covered by a drapery. Removing the drapery and note the chief treasure of each Island, which had apparently been stolen by the vizier's genie to cause distrust between the islands. Look at each item, then re-cover the table. Entering the hallway again, you will hears wedding music, and the sound of guards approaching. Run up the stairs and out into the castle entrance hall. Saladin, the captain of the guard, will confront you and give you 5 seconds to convince him to spare your life. Shows him the letter from the chest upstairs, and you'll be escorted to the chapel where the wedding is taking place.
Watch the cool cutscene and then pursues the vizier out of the chapel and up two flights of stairs to the tower where Cassima (the real one) is tied up.
You're so close to the end now, and I'll only give you one last hint, strike when he's distracted!

CODE

GOBBLEDIGOOK FOR GAMES

ACHTUNG SPITFIRE

Start the game with the parameter **"-cool"** and you'll get unlimited lives!

BOGGLE

You can stop the timer on this game by using the **[Pause]** key on your keyboard. This way you will be able to figure out the real long words. The **[Pause]** key will pause your whole computer, to unpause just press spacebar.

DARK ANGAEL V1.1

Type the following during the Dark Angael title screen (when you hear Azrael's voice say "Dark Angael"):

SHIFT-G = God mode - unlimited ammo, unlimited health
SHIFT-I = Full inventory
SHIFT-P = Full set of superpowers
These cheat codes do not work in multiplayer!!!

DECEPTION

Here are the combinations for the invaders who are otherwise unavailable.

When collecting bodies:

- Invite a merchant and a pirate : a pesky little carpenter will come with them
- Invite a general and a wizard : an annoying messenger comes with them
- Invite a magic doll and a psychic : a curious little alien tags along
- Invite a gem guard and a swordsman : a witch comes along with them

EXTREME ASSAULT

Secret areas

Mission 1: Shoot the hanger floor to uncover a secret area. Besides extras, you will also find a teleporter which will take you to the final mission of Operation Area 1.
Mission 2: Blast the hillside between the two trees located at your 4 o'clock when you start the mission.
Mission 4: Take a closer look at the church clock; it works! Destroy the steeple of the church to obtain some extras.

Mission 5: As you are going up to the village, you will see a single tree on your left. Shoot the base of the mountain behind the tree and a secret place will be revealed. Here you can switch from the helicopter to the tank.
Mission 6: Return to the tunnel you passed through before the mission started. Destroy the giant fan. It's blocking the entrance to a secret area.
Mission 8: Descend into the castle ruins for some more power-ups.
Mission 12: Go in the opposite direction as the green arrow is pointing to get some extras.

OPERATION AREA 2

Mission 1: At the beginning of the mission, you can reveal a secret area if you turn around and shoot the wall behind you.
Mission 3: When the mission starts, do a 180 turn and take out the gun turret positioned in the alcove. Then destroy the wall behind it to find a secret area.
Mission 9: At the start of the mission, turn around and shoot the gate on the back of the rock bridge.

OPERATION AREA 3

Mission 1: Descend into the volcanic craters to find some extras.
Mission 2: Blast all of the crates in the first room. At the end of the mission, there is an entrance to a secret room on your right.
Mission 3: First, fly to the aircraft carrier to collect power-ups. Next, go to the border of the mission area. Wait a short time and you will see an airliner approaching. Shoot him down with a guided missile and then check out the beach. In the jungle you will come to a fork in the road. Shoot the tree with the birds in it.
Mission 4: Destroy the statue in the village for some power-ups.
Mission 5: When you come to a cave with a shattered bridge, descend to collect some extras. Then fly straight ahead and shoot the apparent dead end to enter a secret area.
Mission 6: One way to complete this mission is to first destroy the generator.
Mission 7: You'll find extras behind the first moving wall and after you shoot a hole into the cave wall above the rock.
Mission 8: Drop down into the highest crater and revisit the hall found in Mission 2 for some nice surprises.
Mission 9: At the moving walls go straight, down, then straight and blast a hole into the end of the tunnel for some extra ammo.

OPERATION AREA 4

Mission 1: Shoot gate number three to collect some more extras.

Mission 6: In the room with the descending ceiling, there is a secret passageway to the right.
Mission 8: Shoot the wall, by the ramp, next to the left generator to get a few power-ups.

OPERATION AREA 5

Mission 1: Kill the two friendly helicopters after they help you.
Mission 2: Under the rock bridge is an entrance to a secret area.
Mission 3: Check out the area where the tanks are coming from.
Mission 10: At the beginning of the mission, fly to the right just outside the tunnel for some extras.

OPERATION AREA 6

Mission 4: Follow the ice flow path to a cave that hides some extras.
Mission 6: Find the bridge on your radar and then and go up to collect your bonus.
Mission 7: Shoot the right corner of the large building for help in defeating the final boss.

NETWORK PLAY

Use the name of **HAMMER** when you begin a network game. You'll be able to use a unique series of pre-recorded messages.

Extreme Assault - Full Version

To use cheat codes, type **"oh dear"** (lower case) at the main menu.
After that you will have various cheats.
Single player only.

alt1 = full ammo
alt2 = upgrade current weapon
alt3 = full energy
alt4 = indestructible
alt5 = wow
alt6 = mission compleate
alt7 = deactivate enemies
alt8 = heli mode
alt9 = tank mode
alt0 = speeeed!

Type **EMERTXE** at the main menu to activate Assault Mode:
Alt-U = Fly a UFO

HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC II

Type these in whilst playing a scenario.

911 = Win Scenario
1313 = LOSE Scenario
8675309 = Show Entire Map
123456789 = Give Heroes More Luck
Select one of your heroes and while still on the map screen, press **32167** and recieve 5 BLACK DRAGONS for that hero! Do this for as many heroes as you like!

LETTERS

write to PC PowerPlay
LETTERS
78 Renwick St.
REDFERN, NSW 2016
letters@pcpowerplay.next.com.au

Letter of the month! Win a subscription!

Each month we'll choose a letter that we think is THE BEST that month. Not the funniest (although we reserve the right to hand out a freebie if a letter makes us laugh HARD), but the most intelligent, the most incisive, the most informed.
The winner gets a
FREE 6 MONTH SUBSCRIPTION!
Existing subscribers get 6 months added to their term. How good is that!

Lara Schmara

I have just finished playing Tomb Raider 2 demo (yes, I will NOT write in capitals). I got off your December issue CD. I honestly thought I was playing number 1. It is THE most crappiest sequel to hit the shelves since I was born. I mean, the first one was good, the controls were a bit annoying and the engine wasn't super but it was playable. But to bring out a sequel that is almost identical to the original is shameful.

It may have some new features, oohhh now we can watch Lara's hair sway and she wears different clothes in different climates!!! GOODY!. I think Core and Eidos need to rethink their gaming strategy if they think they can sell because of one computerized woman.

I seriously spent most of the demo trying to find a high ledge where I could do swan dive Lara to a breaking-back kinda' death, now that was the only fun I had in 10 mins of playing it. I think that most people have better things to do than shoot spiders and birds with fire arms.

Some people are going to call me a weirdo or something, but I just had to tell someone, besides Lara is old and real girlfriends are better anyway.

Kooba

Bribery Scandal

I've been a part time gamer for many years now and have played some of the best and some of the totally worst games that have ever graced this planet. From the prehistoric Atari consoles through to the C64 and now super ninja PC machines, sigh... We sure have come a long way... Shit!! I'm really showing my age here!! Well anyway getting back to my point, you see your reviews play a very important part of my gaming life. Your words are vital to me!! A score of 90% or higher is almost a commandment from god saying "ROD YOU MUST BUY THIS GAME!!". But of course mere mortals like me sometimes do not always obey gods commandments (sad but true). So you see, this is one of your magazine's strongest selling points, (good reviews) and I should add here that you do have talented staff with entertaining personalities working in this area, however, lately you guys, err... Gods, rather...have been going through a lot of constructive criticism in this area, and I must say I can't really blame the people for hassling you guys the way they do. I mean how do we know, as consumers, that you guys aren't really good friends with a certain gaming company to hype up certain games in the market? Or, how do we know you guys aren't partly owned by some of the major companies to entice us to buy their games? Or, how 'bout the possibility that you guys are really beings from another planet that want to feed us humans subliminal messages through certain games?!? (as you can see the possibilities are endless). Have I offended the gods yet? Well, that was never my intention, but I do have a possible solution. Why don't you simply just show us (the readers) your scoring format! Sure, we've all heard that some of it has to do with gameplay, presentation, etc... But what's the full marking scheme that gives you guys the total of 100%. Is it 2% gameplay, 3% presentation and 95% bribery or what? Just kidding about the bribery bit, but you can see what I'm getting at, right?

Roderique Tan

Rod, this is god, you must buy this magazine! Look on the contents page, just under Smilin' Ben and you'll see the percentile breakdown. That's about as scientific as it gets. Bribery and influence? Like hell! We are fully independent, and if you could spy on the phone calls I get each month from aggravated distributors and publishers when we score their latest fabbo game low, you'd feel good about the strength of our integrity.

Piracy and prices

I just discovered your great magazine while visiting the local library. I was reading issue 17 about piracy (Superhighway Robbery) and was interested to read about the downfall of the Amiga. I currently have a P200 clone and 2 Amigas. The Amigas get used by my 6yr old son. In the past I used the Amigas a lot for graphics and gaming. Anyway, the article stated one of the major reasons for its downfall was piracy. I don't agree. I believe all those nasty anti-pirating practices by software developers killed their own market. All of these programs never get used anymore because who knows where those little pieces of paper with access codes got to, or the user manuals. Thank god for cracked pirated programs, without which I wouldn't have used the computer at all. I would gladly swap all my bought programs with copy protection for no hassle pirated ones. I'm all for buying software, but if developers insist on customers having to type in access codes everytime you want to use a program then bring on the clever pirate who can get rid of this annoying ritual. Thank god that most software developers are showing a bit of trust and are not continuing this demanding practice.

I'm sure if software companies halved their prices they would triple their sales. How long does it take the average kid (young and old) to save $89.95 for a new release game? Computer users aren't stupid, everyone realises that you have to buy to keep the game developers in business. If prices were lower no-one would mind buying all their programs and people wouldn't have to resort to borrowing a copy from a mate.

Robert Page

Letter of the Month

New games please!

Great work on the magazine, and I'm glad to see it fattening up a bit - let's just hope that the increase in the number of articles continues to increase in line with the number of ads. On to the real point - I'm quite amazed at the lack of originality in games at the moment - Hey, it's another "Real Time Strategy Game". Oh - wow!

What ever happened to all of those ground-breaking original concepts that we all used to love? They got swallowed up in the rush of people trying to jump on the band wagon and make a quick buck. First there was Dune II, then Warcraft, C&C, Red Alert, Dark Reign, Total Annihilation, etc etc etc. And don't forget Wolf 3D, Doom, Quake, and so on. I was interested to note last issue that you mentioned a Diablo clone. Now there was an orig... oops, hang on - does anyone remember a game by Microprose called "Legend"? I do. So let's see some new games, hey? I'm sick of playing Wolf 3D and Dune II.

Trent Yarwood

Piracy and Prices 2

Recently there have been a few people blaming high prices for games on piracy. I have no doubt that there is some influence due to that practise. But I submit that games have dropped in price since the earlier days of CD-ROMS. I remember when I bought the 7th Guest, $100 was the average R.R.P. Nowadays, the highest you'd probably pay is $89.95. That's 10 bucks less. It's not a huge difference, but it all ads up doesn't it? Also, if you have a console like the N64, you have to fork out an average of $120 for a new release. Prices for console games have risen with the new technology, while PC games have remained steady at $90.

So while software piracy is a terrible thing, it isn't having an immediate affect on us price-wise. After all the inflation, and competing console systems our old friend the PC game is getting nothing more than cheaper. And the people to thank for that are our friends at the software houses.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Douglas

The pricing of games is a tricky issue. On the one hand $89.95 is a bit steep when you compare the creative effort in a game with that of a music CD, on the other hand, many games require considerably more development effort than business apps costing $400-$500. Factor into this the fact that game prices really haven't increased over the years, it would be easy for them to point the finger at inflation as a justification for upping the price gradually. The spanner in the works is that there are now many more games being released, competing for your dollars. Expect to see at

least a couple of publishers drop prices to get an edge.

I want my RPG!

Now I have noticed a (BIG) lack in RPG's on the PC for some reason. I hate always having to go to my friend's house to play Final Fantasy 7 all the time. I don't know why the PC has such a great lack in decent RPG's. My friend told me about Fallout but he won't tell me what it is like!!! Could you please tell me if Fallout is like FF7 (if you have played FF7?) with that type of battle scenes and gameplay? I love my RPG's and I hate going to my friends to play FF7 all the time, I just want to be in the comfort of my own home and play to my heart's content.

I hope you people can help me, because people around here are all practically useless when it comes to computers.

Leo Bi
Darwin, NT

Great news Leo, the RPG is back with a vengeance! Expect to see the RPG replace the Real Time Strategy game as the Hot Genre. Fallout was reviewed in PCPP #18, we gave it a deserving 89%. Go get it, you'll love it.

Hexen II, it doth rock!

I am writing in response to Kevin Lau's letter in the last edition of PC PowerPlay, in respect to the performance of the Hexen II demo. I own the full (retail) version of Hexen II and I am quite impressed by its smooth performance on my PC. I would suggest that there is most likely a configuration problem with Kevin's machine. Did he install the GLHexen II executable or only the standard one? Is he using the latest versions of DirectX and GLIDE? Does he have 3D acceleration turned on under DirectX? Is he trying to play Hexen II in a window? Does he have Windows Virtual Memory settings right? Is his hard disk nearly full?

As for gameplay, I found Hexen II to be quite difficult (using the NecroMancer character) until I determined that the best way to kill many of the monsters is to rush up and attack them at close range using short range weapons. Kevin must learn to crouch and strafe to avoid the archers arrows until he is close enough to kill them. Hexen II is NOT Quake, which is one of the reasons I enjoy playing it. If all you want is lots of fast-paced action, then play Quake, but if you want a bit of strategy and problem solving in your games then Hexen is the way to go.

Graeme Taylor

Total Forgiveness

I write this letter to humbly ask for forgiveness. When I read the November issue with the Total Annihilation review (98%) I was almost disgusted that it had gotten such a high mark, as many other people, including you, had said that Dark Reign was the best Real Time Strategy game out this year, blah blah. Dark Reign was a good game and I must admit that I fell into the marketing trap of thinking that it was the best game. Then TA came out with no hype and no fanfare, and just on its merits it gets 98% in your magazine. At the same time you were copping a lot of flak over your ratings and I to have some reservations, and the TA score was the last straw. I almost sent you guys an e-mail ripping you to shreds over the score, but thankfully I didn't, due to a lack of time and laziness. But alas, I recently played the game and was dumfounded at the sheer quality of this game. At no other time have I been left speechless at the realness of a game. It is with great admiration that I apologise for jumping to the conclusion that PC PowerPlay had been sold out, but it was me who had been sold out - I was the one who fell for the hype and I again apologise. PC PowerPlay, keep up the good work, I may not agree with all of your reviews but at least I know that it's because we have different tastes, not because you are influenced by power brokers within the industry.

Nathan Baltoski

Thanks Nathan. We copped a lot of flak when the TA 98% review was published. It's rare to see a score so high. Many gamers thought we'd sold out for sensationalism and a certain publisher with a similar game wasn't pleased AT ALL. What the hey. We had all played TA to death and opinion was unanimous about the score. What's an Editor to do? Drop the rating because it doesn't fit the mould? Like hell. We stand by our review. Total Annihilation IS a 98% game. So there.

Another fantastic MS game

Whilst reading the letters in last month's issue, I was shocked by the article concerning Microsoft Flight Simulator 98. The claims that its author made about the product's inferiority to other programs on the market are absurd. Sure, a computer game can never rival the real world, but the phrase 'as real as it gets', certainly does FS98 justice. In what other flight simulator can you have as many options ranging from the amount of stress induced on your aircraft, to the outside pressure, and control so many other variables? At the present moment, it would be ignorant to say that FS98 isn't the leader in simulation. And as for the imminent problems being faced concerning graphic rates, with FS98 being a prime example, it could be said that the necessity to have 3D acceleration is just the next unavoidable step in computer gaming. It is through technology pushing and demanding products such as FS98 and other power hungry games that this evolution is able to continue. So rather than being cynical of its drawbacks on average computers, wouldn't it be better to look forward and say "this game is shaping the standards of tomorrow"? After all, wouldn't we all like every game to one day be "as real as it gets"?

Liam Sweeney

Smart Super-Shopper

I read Hillary Cam's letter in your December issue regarding shopping around for a cheap PC with great interest. Working for a PC reseller myself, I understand what Hillary is referring to. Although I couldn't help but think Hillary has missed the point somewhat. Sure there are some "Superstores" who charge a little more. Heck, maybe even recommended retail price, the majority does not, however. In any case, the 'Superstores' also supply the following benefits: convenience, range of product, stock and service.

As far as picking up the Yellow Pages and the newspaper goes - I'm all for shopping around. Mind you though, I see a lot of customers saying, "We bought our last PC from 'Joe's PCs', everything was fine for 3 months until it suddenly sprouted black smoke. When we took it back, Joe's PCs had closed down." Typically, these customers will purchase a brand name second time around. On top of that, the customer does not always get the same thing when purchasing a PC.

The really cheap systems you'll see advertised are most often built up using highly generic parts (unbranded) with little or no backup from manufacturers, (which helps when you need new drivers for a new operating system). Some parts may be unreasonably cheap as they may have been grey marketed or grey imported. Say you got a good deal on a brand new Sony monitor, let's say you paid $200 below the price everyone else was selling them. Tough luck, no warranty. Then there are the PC resellers evading sales tax, but that really is another story.

In summing up, this is NOT a free world - you get what you pay for!

Harley Kingston

FOTM

I'll get straight to the point... Australia SUX when it comes to games, I should know, I live here. Your magazine is great, excellent - you try your best to get the reviews people want, but in Australia, your best isn't good enough. I'll give you an example, page 32 of your latest issue talked about Quake II Public Beta test, you found out everything you could about the game, but the problem is, the game is already out in the US, tournaments have already begun, every day I am on IRC hearing people say, "Do ya have Quake 2 yet? It's the best" all I can say is "No sorry, it hasn't come out over here..." then they laugh. Australia needs to try harder to get the games ASAP. I'd have to say that this is contributing to the piracy in Australia, think about it; someone comes up to you and says, "look, I just found a T1 FTP site with Quake 2 full on it...", what are you meant to say to them, "I can't take it, it's against the law to pirate"?!? The last thing I will say is Australia, SHAPE UP, OR I'M SHIPPING OUT!

Martin Turel

In lieu of a regular Freak Of The Month, we'll just let Martin's letter stand on its own as a poetically crafted example of a fine argument delivered with style and substance.

Falcon 3.0

Spectrum Holobyte 1992

In the pages of PC PowerPlay - and indeed almost every serious PC games mag, you'll find frequent and revered reference to Falcon 3.0. Whenever we review a flight sim we'll throw in a token mention. Whenever the hell we feel like it, in fact, we'll allude to the Great One. The simple act of typing the Name of God brings about a warm, fuzzy glow, fuelled by memories of the most intense, most absorbing, most wonderful gaming experience I've had. Falcon 3.0. Brrrrr... that was good.

In August of 1992 I was fortunate enough to be working for a company that wasn't doing too well. Along with 30 others I was retrenched. Alright! They gave me a pile of cash and sent me on my way. Instantly realising the magnitude of this opportunity, I headed straight down to Meghead and picked up the all-new Thrustmaster WCS Mk 1, FCS Mk 1, and a much-coveted Maths Co-Processor for my 386DX/25, as Falcon 3.0, which I'd bought the previous week, supported and needed it for the ultra-realistic High Fidelity mode. Then I went home and played it non-stop for a year, until the money ran out. Oh god it was good. Total absorbtion gaming and the official end of my social life.

It all stems from this boy's jet fighter pilot fantasy. Mine and that of hundreds of thousands of others were satiated beyond our wildest imaginations with Falcon 3.0. It had it all. Only EF2000, which benefitted from considerably more advanced PC technology, came close to the complete combat flight sim experience. We didn't realise how much was possible until Falcon 3.0. It was real.

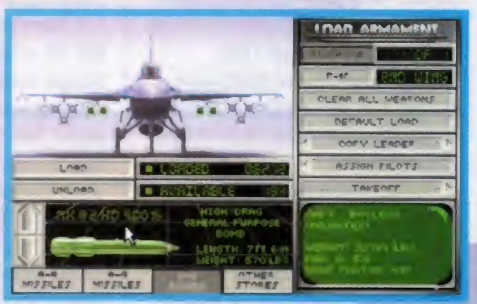
The fantasy is real

In the cockpit and inbound to a target just a few minutes away. Cruising at 40,000 feet to conserve fuel, as the small, single-engined fighter was carrying a load too close to critical for anything more that a clean delivery and egress. With a huge 500-gallon tank under each wing sitting beside each of the two Durandal cratering anti-runway bombs, sitting beside each of the AMRAAM missiles for self defence, with a Sidewinder on each wingtip for last resort fight to the death dogfighting, this bird was slow and sluggish. Flicking the radar on as often as I dare, it suddenly shows a flock of MiG-29's orbiting my target, an enemy runway precariously close to my front line. No problem, each of my three wingmen, carefully selected from a rested group of Air to Air specialists, carry the most potent mix of Air to Air weaponry I could devise without compromising their mission range. As it is, they've had to sacrifice the lifesaving ECM pod in favour of the conformal centerline tank. At maximum radar missile range I order them to attack, pushing the Thrustmaster throttle up to full military power, being careful not to engage fuel-eating afterburner, and beginning a steep descent.

It goes off. 20,000 feet above me my escorts are engaging - and more importantly, distracting, the MiGs. Sweeping low through a canyon, I jettison my nearly empty external tanks and feel the F-16 gradually pick up speed. Not enough. Blasting clear of the mountains the enemy airbase is ahead. 5 seconds of afterburn, down to 50 feet above the ground. Chaff and flares every couple of seconds. The ground based AAA opens up, tracers everywhere. Very exciting. The runway is in sight. Having set up my waypoints to line me up with the strip of tarmac, I drop the anchors. Airbrakes out, flaps down, engine back to idle, I bank hard to bring the airspeed down to under 250 knots, being the optimum delivery envelope for the Durandals. Over the runway, clean and straight. I could land if I wanted to. One, two. As the Durandals arc towards the runway I go ballistic. Full burners for another 5 seconds and straight up to the dogfight. We're winning. Still another MiG giving the boys trouble. Switching to air to air mode, I select the Sidewinder, target the MiG and wait for the tone. Everything goes red. A ground-based SAM has launched and found its way up my tailpipe. Catastrophic engine failure and a fire = eject immediately. So I do, drifting towards the now useless enemy airbase.

I have lost, I have died, but I have lived. I was there, I was doing it, it was real. The war goes on. For another day or so, in the game, that airbase won't be causing us any problems. I could sit in the cockpit, on the runway, engine off, for days at a time and the war around me would run. Over thousands of square miles and involving all description of combatants. And more. A lot more. Falcon 3.0 changed many lives. It wasn't a game, it was a sim and I loved it.

Ben Mansill



(top) Not pretty, but perfect (above) Loading the F-16 prior to starting a mission was a careful balancing act

ADRENALINE RUSH

3Dfx interactive

Realistic, Pure Quality 3D Gaming

PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE November 1997

Shock Every Dimension.

Prepare yourself! Enter the domain where dreams become real, where the line between imagination and reality blurs. Adrenaline Rush 3D. Total experience. Total control. Total invincibility. Immortal combat at 800x600. High speed car destruction at 60 FPS.

With six huge megabytes of EDO memory, you never, ever need an upgrade to experience 3D gaming at 800x600.

Do real work. Fly high and fast with screen resolutions up to 1152x864 with 16 million colors and 120 Hz refresh rates. Whether you're working hard or hardly working, the Adrenaline Rush 3D rules. It even comes with 3 games! *Turok Dinosaur Hunter*, *Mechwarrior II Mercenaries*, and *Interstate 76*. All full games, all fully accelerated, and all excellent titles.

Now, it's your time to command the 3D world. Assault Your Senses! Shock Every Dimension! Make your own rules and prepare yourself for the experience of a lifetime. Prepare yourself for Adrenaline Rush 3D.

The fastest 3Dfx Voodoo Rush card on the market, and PC Gamer Editor's Choice, the Adrenaline Rush 3D has received rave reviews all over the world.

Consult your doctor before playing!

Turok: Dinosaur Hunter

Mechwarrior II Mercenaries

Interstate '76

TYRELL distributors

Exclusively distributed by:
www.tyrelldistributors.com
12 Great Eastern Highway, Rivervale, WA 6103.
PO Box 121, Burswood, WA 6100.
Phone (08) 9242-1779 Fax (08) 9355-1905.

NOW SUPPORTING OVER 40 GAMES

Including:
Total Annihilation
C.A.R.T.S - Jedi Knight &
Age of Empires

›THE GAME STARTS HERE ...

Wireplay

The games network

THIS IS WHERE CHALLENGE LIVES

NOW YOU CAN REALLY EXPERIENCE THE EXCITEMENT OF ONLINE MULTIPLAYER GAMING

WANNA BE PART OF IT?

SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY OFFER: LIMITED TIME ONLY!

LOCAL CALL - MELBOURNE / SYDNEY - 1300 654 987* TO RECEIVE YOUR FREE CD ROM WITH CONNECTION SOFTWARE, MULTIMEDIA WALKTHROUGH AND EXCLUSIVE PLAYABLE DEMOS.

WIREPLAY - GREAT FEATURES - SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE - THIS IS NOT THE NET.

WEB SITE - WWW.WIREPLAY.COM.AU

*Calls for mobile phones at applicable mobile rates. Calls from outside Sydney and Melbourne local call zones at applicable long distance rates.
Wireplay and the Wireplay logo are trademarks of British Telecommunications plc used in Australia under exclusive license by Telstra Multimedia.